AN ANTIDOTE AGAINST THE Poysonous Weeds OF *HERETICAL BLASPHEMIES*,

Which During the deplorable interval of *Church-Government* have grown up in the Reforming Church of *England*.

As it was lately presented to the Church of God at Great YARMOUTH.

By IOHN BRINSLEY, Minister of the Gospel there.

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To the
CHRISTIAN READER.

Chriſtian,

THoſe *Preſervatives* which are ſoveraignly uſeful at all times, cannot in times of common *Contagion* be reputed uſeleſſe, or unſeaſonable. Upon that account it is, that I have now adventured theſe few *Meditations* to a publike view. Surely, if ever there was a time of *ſpiritual Contagion*, ſuch is this, whereinto Providence hath caſt us at this day in this Nation; wherein the *Plague* of *Hereticall Blaſphemy* is grown ſo deſperately *Epidemical*, that many (once ſeemingly precious) ſouls are now infected with it. Alaſſe what ſad *tokens* (I cannot ſay *Gods*, but the *Devils* Tokens) are now to be ſeen upon ſome of them, in whom not long ſince the *Image of God* to the judgment of *Charity* was hopefully conſpicuous; in ſo much that without a miracle of mercy there is little hope

hope of their Recovery. And who is there that hath the heart of a *Chriſtian*, but out of a ſad reſentment of ſo dreadful an *Evil* yet growing and ſpreading, would willingly contribute all poſſible *Counſels* and *Endeavours* for the healing of it? To this end it is that I have now communicated this *Antidote*, which (as I am aſſured it can be *hurtful* to none, ſo) if it may be *helpful* to any, whether by way of *Prevention*, or *Cure*, I have what I aymed at, and ſhall reſt,

Thine in the ſervice of our

Yarmouth,
Auguſt 22.
1650.

common Lord,

JOH. BRINSLEY.

AN Antidote

Againſt the Poyſonous Weeds of Hereticall BLASPHEMIES.

2 TIM. 3. 2.

For men ſhall be Lovers of their own ſelves, Covetous, Boaſters, Proud, [Blaſphemers.]

IN the verſe foregoing the Apoſtle giveth his *Timothy* a general advertiſement concerning *Evill times*, which were to come. [*This know alſo, that in the laſt dayes perilous times ſhall come.*]

In the laſt dayes], that is, hereafter, in ſucceeding times: both in *Timothies* time, which the Apoſtle here hath an eye unto, as appeareth from the fifth verſe of the Chapter, where he willeth him to avoid ſuch perſons as afterward he ſpeaketh of [*from ſuch turn away*]; as alſo in *after ages* of the Church. So *Calvin* apprehends it. *By the laſt dayes* (ſaith he) *the Apoſtle here underſtands the whole ſtate of the Church under the Goſpel*; which here he declareth and foretelleth ſhould not be ſuch a quiet and peaceable ſtate as ſome happily dreamed of, but a troubleſome and dangerous ſtate. *In the laſt dayes perilous times ſhall come.*]

Sub extremis dictus comprehendit univerſum Chriſtianæ Eccleſiæ ſtatum. Calv. ad locum.

Perilous times] Καιροὶ χαλεποὶ. *Tempora difficilia, moleſta, periculoſa. Hard* and *difficult* times: *Troubleſome* and *Greivous* times: *perilous* and *dangerous* times: Times difficult, greivous, dange-

Ita tamen ut malitia, de quâ loquitur, ſubinde majores vires ſumat, & cum tempore creſcat, uſque ad extremum diem. Harming. ad loc.

dangerous in general to all Christians, in special to *Timothies*, the faithful *Ministers* of the Gospel. *Formidolosa tempora* (as the Orator hath it) *Fearful, dreadful* times; Such times (saith the Apostle) [*shall come*]: come upon the Church.

Cicero.

But how so? What is it that should make the times so bad, so dreadful? For this he assigneth the reason in *verse* 2 A reason taken from the evil *Qualities*, and dispositions of men who should live in these times; *For men shall be lovers of their owne selves. &c.*]

Obs. *Lo, what it is which maketh evill times*, viz. *Evill men living in those times*. Herein it is that the Apostle placeth the evill of those times, which here he speaketh of, not in *penal evils, evils of judgment*, outward Calamities, as *War, Famine, Pestilence*, &c. (which a carnal eye looketh upon as the only things which make evill times), but in the *evils of* sin which abound in those times. This, this it is which maketh evill times. *It is an evill time* (saith the Prophet *Amos cap.* 5. 13.), but what made it so? Why the *manifold transgressions*, and *mighty sins* of the people; (so the verse foregoing giveth the reason of it.) I, though the times should be never so successful and prosperous in all other respects, yet if sin abound in them, they are evill times: Καιροὶ χαλεποὶ, *Difficult times*, specially for the Ministers of God to bear up head against the stream. *Grievous* times. To a gracious spirit nothing more grievous then to see iniquity abounding, and so the name of God dishonoured. This was the Corrosive which galled and vexed *Lots righteous soule*, even the *filthy conversation of the wicked Sodomites*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 7. And *Perilous* times, being infectious times, wherein all that live in them are in danger in one kind or other of being made *partakers* of the sins of others; either by *complying* with them, or *coming* at them, or *not mourning* for them, or not *appearing* for God against them as they ought to do.

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Applic. Let it be taken notice of by the way; Brethren, there are many amongst us, (I must not say *all*, for there are some who dreame of *golden* times, and *glorious* times, and *blessed* times, never better, how truly I shall show you anon), but many and the greatest part) complaine of evill times, difficult, grievous, dangerous times; and therein they are not mistaken, for they are so in truth. But what is it that maketh them so? why, the evils of sin abounding in these times. True indeed, there are other

things

things which to flesh & blood are hard, and grievous, and perilous. The *sword* is yet amongst us, and *famine* is amongst us, and *decay of trading* is amongst us, and though not *Pestilence*, yet some other diseases which are looked upon as to a degree infectious and contagious, are amonst us. But behold greater evils then these. All kind of *sinful abominations* are to be found in the midst of us. And these are they which make the times to be so evill times.

Taking notice of this, withall take notice of the way, the next way, the onely way to mend these times. Every of us mend our selves; mend the *Persons*, and mend the *Times*. As for *judgments*, it is in vaine to repine and murmure at them, to list at them. This is but as the galled horse that seeketh to shake off his burden, which, being fastned to him, galleth him so much the more. Judgments they must do the work for which they are sent, execute their *Commission*. Let our hands be against the evils of sin. Every of us endeavouring according to our (now almost forgottten) *Covenant*, *to go each before other in a reall Reformation of our own hearts and lives*. This is the way to make the *street* clean; every one to sweep before his own dore. And this is the way to make the times better, every one to mend, to reforme one. This is the truest *Emendatio temporum*, amending of the times, to amend the persons in those times. So long as men are such as the Apostle here describeth some, it is impossible the times should be good. No, they will be, they must be *difficult*, *troublesome*, *dangerous*, *evill* times.

But what kind of *men* are they which have such a maligne influence upon the times, to make them so evill? This the Apostle sets forth in the sequel of this verse; where he reckons up a *Catalogue of vices*, which if once they come to be *Epidemical*, rife and common, they infect and poyson the times, proving dangerous and pernicious to the Church. The first is *Self-love*, φιλαυτία which the Apostle here placeth in the front, as a *file-leader*, and that not without cause; in as much as this vice maketh way for, and ushereth in all the rest. The second is *Covetousnesse*, φιλαργυρία, *Love of money*, which the Apostle in the tenth verse of the sixth Chapter of the former Epistle calleth the *Root of all evill*. The third is *Arrogancie*, and the fourth *Pride*, two vices neer a kinne, *Cosen germans*, ἀλοζονία, ὑπερηφανία, when men shall arrogate much unto themselves; looking overly and superciliously upon o-

thers. The fifth is, that which I have ſingled out from the reſt, being led to it by the preſent occaſion, *Blaſphemy*; and upon that I ſhall ſpend my following Meditations. *Men ſhall be Blaſphemers*].

Blaſphemers]. The word Originally is Greek, Βλάσφημοι, retained in the *Latin* and *Engliſh*. The derivation of the word will lead us to the proper ſignification of it. Βλασφημεῖν, q. βαλλεῖν ταῖς φήμαις, ſaith the Etymologiſt *impetere rumoribus*, to aſſault one with rumours and falſe tales; or rather (as it is more vulgarly taken) *q.* βλάπτειν τὴν φήμην, *Alterius famam maledictis lædere*, to wrong the good name of another. This is *Blaſphemy* at large; any wrong injurie, indignity offered to the good name, credit, reputation of another, whether of *God* or of *Man*.

Euſtathius.

Vide Bez. in Gr. Annot. in Mat. 9 3. Aut quia eſt φήμη βλάπτουσα τὴν δόξαν ἑτέρου. Aretus Problem. loc. 109. de Blaſphemiâ.

1. For *Man*, the wronging of his good name by ſlanderous, contumelious ſpeeches, it may be called *Blaſphemie*. And ſo we finde it, not only among prophane Writers, whith whom the word is common in that ſenſe, but even in ſacred Writ In that third of *Titus v.* 2. the Apoſtle chargeth Chriſtians that they *ſpeak evill of no man*. The Original hath it, *Blaſpheme* no man, μηδένα βλασφημεῖν. Of this kinde of *Blaſphemie* it is that the Apoſtle ſpeaketh, *Col.* 3. 8. where he reckon up this amongſt the *Rags* of the *old Adam*; which he requireth Chriſtians to put off, [*But now you alſo put off all theſe, anger, wrath, malice, blaſphemie*], viz. ſpeaking evill of their neighbour. In this ſenſe *Paul* ſaith of himſelf, 1 *Cor.* 4. 13. and *Rom.* 3. 8. that he was *defamed, ſlanderouſly reported of*: where in both places the word is, *Blaſphemed*. This Saint *Peter* tels us is the lot of Gods people to be thus *Blaſphemed*, evill ſpoken of by wicked men; 1 *Pet.* 4. 4. To wrong the name of any good man is *Blaſphemie* at large.

2. But moſt commonly in phraſe of Scripture, and amongſt Eccleſiaſtical Writers, the word is taken in a more reſtrained ſenſe, as relating unto *God*; and it imports ſome *derogation*, ſome wrong or injurie offered to the name of God. Which may be done either by *thought*, *word*, or *deed*. By *thought*, when any ſhall entertain any diſhonourable opinions, or conceptions concerning God, thinking otherwiſe of him then is meet. By *word*, when men ſhall utter and expreſſe thoſe diſhonourable thoughts by diſgraceful language, ſpeaking otherwiſe of God then is meet. In *deed*, when men ſhall do that which is highly diſhonourable

unto

unto God. Each of these may be called *Blasphemie*. There is a Blasphemy in *thought*. It was *Jobs* fear concerning his sons, lest in the midst of their mirth they should have *Blasphemed God in their hearts*, Job 1. 5. have let in some dishonourable thoughts concerning the Majesty of God into their hearts in the heat and liberty of their feasting. And there is a Blasphemie in *Deed*. It is the Lords complaint against the Jewes, *Is.* 65. 7. *They have burnt Incense upon the Mountains, and Blasphemed me upon the Hills*. There they had done that which tended to the high dishonour of God, and so blasphemed him, though not *verbally* and *formally*, yet *actually* and *interpretatively*. But most properly *Blasphemy* is an injury offered to the name of God by *word*. This is *Blasphemy* in an *Ecclesiastical* sense; To speak impiously and wickedly, so as either *directly* and *immediatly*, or *indirectly* and *interpretatively* it reacheth unto the *contumely* of God himself.

Quæst. But what kind of *Blasphemy* is it which we meet with in the text? [*Men shall be blasphemers*] but what kind of Blasphemers? whether of *God* or of *Men*?

Answ. Here Expositors are divided. Some understand it in the former sense, translating the word barely *maledici*, *Slanderers*, *Defamers*, *Evil-speakers*; and some of them restraining it only to *Men*. But others here look upon the Word with another eye, conceiving the Apostle here principally to point at this highest kind of evill speaking, impious speaking, and that either directly or by consequence against *God* himselfe. So *Espencæus*, *Aretius*, *Grotius*, [*Blasphemers*] viz. of God; And the last of them giveth a reason why he conceives it should be so; a reason taken from the order of the words, wherein he apprehends a kind of Gradation. [*Men shall be lovers of themselves, Covetous, Boasters, Proud, ὑπερήφανοι, Contemners of other men* (as he expounds the Word) I, not sparing *God* himself. *Blasphemers* of him. And if that be true, which *Epiphanius* with great probability conjectures, *viz.* that the Apostle here in this description aimes at those *Hereticks* which should spring up in the infancie of the Church, as *viz. Simon*, *Menander*, *Ebion*, *Cerinthus*, *Carpocrates*, and the *Gnosticks*; we shall not need to mince the matter; for such were they, down-right *Blasphemers* in an Ecclesiastical sense; *Blasphemers of God*. And that the Apostle speaketh here, if not of *them*, yet of *such* as they, it is rightly and clearly collected

Hâc significatione peculiari usurpatur à sacris Scriptoribus nostris, quomodo etiam apud Platonem bisponitur. Beza Gr. Ann. in Mat. 9. 3.

Βλάσφημοι non sunt hoc loco qui in Deum probra congerunt, sed in genere maledici. Vide Leigh Critic. sacra ex Sculteto.

Blasphemi, in Deum & ejus doctrinam, falsa & impia de eo loquentes. Claud. Espencæus ad loc.

Βλάσφημοι, *in ipsum Deum maledici; nam in hoc sensu eminentiore sumendam hic hanc vocem, indicat ordo.* Grotius.

ὑπερήφανοι, *contemptores aliorum. Idem ad loc.* Epiph. Hæresi 26.

cted from the sixth and eighth verses of the chapter. Where shewing, who and what they were whom he spake of, [*Of this sort* (saith he) *are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women*, verse 6.] plainly pointing out false teachers, *Hereticks*, who vented and scattered their false doctrines and heresies, clancularly and closely in corners, taking advantage upon the weaker sex, (as the devil at first did,) to make the first impression upon them, as all *Hereticks* in all ages ever have done, and at this day do. And again *vers.* 8. *As Jannes and Iambres withstood* Moses, *so do these also resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, concerning the faith reprobate.* Such they were whom the Apostle here speaketh of, *Blasphemous Hereticks.* And being such, we may well conceive this to be the sinne which here he chargeth upon them, *viz. Blasphemy* in a restrained sense, even *Blasphemy against God.*

Vide Engl. new Annot. in 2 Tim. 3.6.

Having thus found out the kind of evil here charged, our next work must be yet a little more fully to open the *nature* of it.

Blasphemy, in proper acceptation, what it is, I have already told you in the general; It is any *Injury offered to the name of God by word*: Or *speaking evill of the name of God.* So the Lord complains of it, *Is.* 52.5. *My name continually every day is blasphemed.* To which text the Apostle relates, *Rom.* 2. 24. *The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles*] That is, evil-spoken of. Now for a more particular explication, that we may dive a little into the bowels of this sinne, let me briefly open unto you these two things. First, *What is meant by the name of God.* And secondly, *How the name of God may be injured by word, evil-spoken of.*

2

1. For the former; by the *name of God* we are to understand any thing, whereby God *Himself* or his *Will*, his *Nature* or his *Mind*, are made known to us, (*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*, Command. 3.) Now this is done many ways. As by his *Titles, Attributes, Works, Word, Religion, Ordinances, Image. His Titles*, as *Iehovah, Elohim, God, Lord.* His *Attributes* or *Properties*, as *Power, Goodnesse, Mercy, Truth.* His Works of *Creation* and *Providence.* His *Word*, which is his mind and will revealed in the Scriptures. *Religion*, the *Doctrine and Practice* of it. His *Ordinances, Prayer*, the publick *Ministry*

of

of the Word, Sacraments, Sabbaths. His *Image*, whether *Eſſentiall*, as it was in *Chriſt*, who is called the *Image of the inviſible God*, 1 *Col.* 15. the *expreſſe Image of his perſon*, Heb. 1.2. which is called the *name of God*, Exod. 23. 21. *My name is in him*, (ſpeaking of Chriſt): Or *Accidental*, as it is in *men*, upon whom the name of God is called, as it is upon *Magiſtrates*, who are therefore called *Gods*, *Pſal.* 82. 1. 6. *Exod.* 22. 28. And upon *Miniſters* who ſtand in the place of God as his *Ambaſſadours*, acting in his name, and *bearing his name*, (as it is ſaid of *Paul*, *Acts* 9. 15.) And generally upon all the *faithful* people of God, who bear the Image of their heavenly Father, and are *called by his name*, as we have it, *Deut.* 28. 10. *Jer.* 14. 9, By theſe God maketh himſelf known unto us, and therefore each may be called his *name*.

Queſt. 2, Now, *How may this name of God be ſaid to be injured, evill ſpoken of?*

Anſw. I anſwer in the general, when men ſhall abuſe any of theſe by word, ſpeak contumeliouſly of them. This Contumely redounding unto God himſelf, every word ſo ſpoken is *Blaſphemie*, As

1. When the *Titles* of God are abuſed; whether by way of *Incantation*, as thoſe Jewiſh *Exorciſts* called the *name of Jeſus* over them which had evill ſpirits, *Acts* 19. 13. or by way of *Execration*, curſing the name of God, or by his name, which was the Blaſphemie of the *Iſraelitiſh womans ſon*, Levit. 24. 11. who *blaſphemed the name of the Lord, and curſed*; or by way of *Pejeration*, forſwearing, or by *way of wicked ſwearing*, which *Tremelius* renders *Blaſphemia*, Blaſphemy. *Levit.* 5. 1. 1.

Vocem Blaſphemiæ. Tremel.

Secondly, God is Blaſphemed in his *Attributes*, and that three wayes. 2.

1. *When men ſhall deny that unto God which properly belongs unto him, and is agreeable to his nature:* As when men ſhall deny him to be ſuch a one as he hath revealed himſelf; denying him to be *Omnipreſent*, *Omniſcient*, *Omnipotent*: which laſt was the Blaſphemie of *Rabſhakeh* and the ſervants of the King of *Aſſyria*, who bade defiance unto God in point of power, as if he had not been able to deliver *Ieruſalem* out of the hands of their Maſter, 2 *Kings* 18. 35. compared with *chap.* 19. 6.

2. *When men ſhall attribute that unto God, which is not agreeable to his nature*: faſten diſhonourable attributes upon him, taking

up

up, and venting of mean and low apprehensions concerning God, as the *Heathens* of old, and some *Hereticks* have done, and *Idolaters*, and blind *ignorant* persons daily do: who misconceiving of God, thinking him to be like nnto themselves (as the Lord saith of the wicked man, *Psal.* 50. 21.) expresse those their misconceivings, to the disparaging of the Majesty of the infinite God.

3. *When men shall attribute that unto the creature, which is proper to the Creator*: whether unto *themselves*; that is the *Blasphemy* which the Scribes censure Christ for (though unjustly) *Mat.* 9. 2, 3. *This man blasphemeth* (say they) *viz.* in taking upon him to forgive sinnes, which is a work proper unto God. Or unto others, as when men shall make *Gods of men*, atttibuting *divine properties*, or giving *divine honour to them*; as the People to *Herod*, Acts 12. 22. And the Lystrians to *Paul* and *Barnabas*, Acts 14. 11, 12, 13. and as *Court-parasites* do sometimes to their *Princes*, and *Romish flatterers* to their *lord god the Pope* (as some of them have not spared to call him.) Each of these is *Blasphemy*. Blasphemy against the *Attributes* of God.

Dicitur hic Βλασφημεῖν, *non qui Deo maledicit, sed qui quod Dei est sibi arrogat.* Groti. ad loc.

Thirdly, there is blasphemy against the *works* of God; His works of *Creation* and *Providence*. And thus again God may be blasphemed three ways.

1. When men shall deny these works, or either of them: deny the works of *Creation*, as those *Philosophers* who would have the world to be from *Eternity*, coexistent with God himselfe. Deny the work of *Providence*, as *Epicurus* did, and *Aristotle* is conceived to have done; attributing the events of things, either to the *course of nature*, to *Fate* and *Destiny*, or to *Chance* and *Fortune*.

Opinio Epicuri Deum non curare res humanas; quae videtur etiam Aristotel's *fuisse sententia*: Gro. *in* 1 Tim 6.4.

2. When men shall *villifie*, speak disgracefully of the one or other of these works. Of the work of *Creation*, *Momus*-like carping at Gods workmanship in any of his Creatures. Of the work of *Providence*, quarrelling with his dispensations, finding fault with his ordering and disposing of the course of things, as if it were not in *Wisedome*, in *Justice*, *&c.*

3. When they shall *attribute the works of God unto Satan*, as the malicious Jews, who ascribed those miraculous works wrought by the divine power of Christ unto *Beelzebub*, *Mat.* 12. 24. Thus is God blasphemed in his works.

Fourthly

Fourthly, there is a Blaſphemy againſt the *Word* of God, the ſacred *Scriptures*. When men ſhall derogate from their *Authority, Sufficiencie, Perfection, Certainty*. Such is the Blaſphemy of thoſe who *deny* them to be the Word of God; or ſpeak *contumeliouſly* and *diſgracefully* of them, as a *dead letter*, a *Leſbian leaden Rule*, a *noſe of Wax*, *Inkie Divinity*, which is the language of ſome of the *Romaniſts*, and others. 4.

Fifthly, There is a Blaſphemy againſt the *Religion* of God; When men ſhall ſpeak againſt it, as the *Jewes* did againſt *Pauls* Doctrine, *Acts* 13.45. *They ſpake againſt thoſe things which were ſpoken by* Paul, *contradicting and blaſpheming*. Or having imbraced the true Religion of God, ſhall afterwards *renounce* it, make defection from it, whether through *fear*, as *Paul* ſaith that by puniſhing and perſecuting of Chriſtians he made them to *Blaſpheme*, Acts 26. 11. viz. by abjuring or renouncing their Religion. Or for any other reſpect: Thus *Hymeneus* and *Alexander* are ſaid to *Blaſpheme*, 1 *Tim.* 1. *ult.* viz. by *making ſhipwrack of the Faith* which they had profeſſed, and ſo ſpeaking evill of it. 5.

Sixthly, Of the *Ordinances* of God, when men ſhall ſpeak diſgracefully of them, any of them; as of the *Miniſtery of the Word*, as they did who called *Pauls* preaching *Babling*, Acts 17. 18. and the Grecians who accounted it *fooliſhneſſe*, 1 Cor. 1. Or of the *Sacraments* or *Sabbaths*, as *Jeruſalems adverſaries* did, of whom it is ſaid, *They mocked at her Sabbaths*, Lam. 1. 7. 6.

Seventhly and laſtly, God may be ſaid to be blaſphemed in his Image. And that not only in his *Eſſential* Image, his Son Chriſt, who is God equal with his Father: and ſo what is done to the one by way of honour or diſhonour, redoundeth to the other, as our Saviour himſelf tels the Jewes, *John* 5. 23. but alſo to his *accidental* Image. Thus God is blaſphemed in ſpeaking evill of the *lawful Magiſtrate*, concerning whom the prohibition is, *Thou ſhalt not revile the Gods* (or Judges), nor *curſe the Ruler of thy people*, Exod. 22. 28. This alſo is *Blaſphemy*. *Naboth hath blaſphemed God and the King*, 1 King. 21. 10. *They ſpeak evil of Dignities*, (ſaith the Apoſtle of ſome 2 *Pet.* 2. 10. βλασφημοῦντες blaſpheme them. So in reproaching and ſlandring the Miniſters of Chriſt. This alſo in *Pauls* language is *Blaſphemy*, Rom. 3. 8. 1 *Cor.* 4. 13. So again to ſpeak evill of any of the Saints of God, and that becauſe they are ſuch, this alſo is *Blaſphemy*, 1 Pet. 4. 4. *They ſpeak* 7.

evill of you]. *Blaſpheme* you. Such are the reproaches and contumelies which are caſt upon any for righteouſneſſe ſake; no leſſe then *Blaſphemies*, ſtriking at God through their ſides, in whom his *Image* is conſpicuous. All theſe wayes the name of God may be ſaid to be blaſphemed. So as there are diverſe kinds of blaſphemies againſt God.

Iſa. 37. 23, 24.

And as there are diverſe *kinds*, ſo there are diverſe *degrees*. There is a Blaſphemy which is of *Ignorance*, and there is a *Malicious* Blaſphemy. The former when men *ſpeak evill of what they know not*: ſpeak evill of God of Chriſt, of his Religion, &c. becauſe they know no better. Such was *Pauls Blaſphemy* before his converſion. *I was a Blaſphemer* (ſaith he) But how ſo? *I did it ignorantly*, 1 Tim. 1. 13. The latter is, when men having beene *inlightned*, and having *taſted of the heavenly gift, and beene made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt*, &c. (as the Apoſtle deſcribeth the qualification of an Apoſtate, *Heb.* 6. 4, 5.) *having received the knowledge of the truth* (as we have it, *Heb.* 10. 26.) ſhall afterwards fall away, ſo as to ſpeak evill of that way wherein before they walked, to deride and mock it; this our Saviour calleth *Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, Matth. 12. 31. viz. not againſt the *perſon*, but againſt the *Work* of the Holy Ghoſt; againſt the work of *Illumination*, and *Conviction* in the ſoule. Of all kinds and degrees of *Blaſphemy* this is moſt dreadful. *Blaſphemie*, though it be of *ignorance*, is a ſin of a high nature. So *Paul* looked upon it after his converſion; reckoning up this as one of the ſins which made him in his own apprehenſion the *Chief of ſinners*, 1 Tim. 1. 15. But *malicious Blaſphemy* is inexpiable; a ſin, and the only ſin exempt from mercy. *All manner of ſin and Blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven, but the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven unto men*, Matth. 12. 31.

Thus have I with what brevity I could, laid before you the *nature, kinds*, and *degrees* of this ſin, which the Apoſtle here foretelleth ſhould in after times prove rife and common in the Church. [*Men ſhall be Blaſphemers*] ſpeaking evill of the *name of God*, and ſo wronging and diſhonouring him in his *Titles, Properties, Works, Word, Religion, Ordinances, Image*. Some in one kinde, ſome in another. Such he ſaith there ſhould be in *Timothies* time, and in after ages; the Church ſhould ſeldome want ſome or other of this kinde of men.

Queſt.

Queſt. But *who*, or *what* were they of whom the Apoſtle here foretelleth that they ſhould prove ſo deſperately wicked? *Men ſhall be Blaſphemers*] But what men?

Anſw. We anſwer, The men here pointed at are

1. Generally, *Chriſtians*, not ſuch as were *without*, *Heathens*, or *Jewes*, open and profeſſed enemies to Chriſt and his Goſpel; but ſuch as made an outward profeſſion of Chriſtianity; and ſuch as pretended themſelves members of the Church. So much we may collect from the fifth verſe of the Chapter, where the Apoſtle deſcribeth thoſe of whom he here ſpeaks, to be ſuch as had μόρφωσιν εὐσεβείας, *a forme of godlineſſe*, a vizard of piety, a formall profeſſion of *Faith* and *Holineſſe*, though denying the power of it. Such they were to be for the general, *Profeſſors*.

2. More particularly, not only *Profeſſors*, but *Teachers*. Such as took upon them to teach and inſtruct others, and were very active, zealous and induſtrious in that way. So the Apoſtle proceedeth in his deſcription in the following verſe 6. *Of this ſort are they which creep into houſes*, &c.] Such as under a pretence and colour of propagating and promoting the Goſpel, went about venting their erroneous and heretical opinions, and *Blaſphemies*, ſeeking to make *Proſelytes*, to gaine diſciples, corrupting thoſe with their peſtilent doctrines who would hearken to them. Such were they, of whom the Apoſtle here foretelleth, they ſhould be found guilty of this great Evill, [*Men ſhall be Blaſphemers*]

So he foretold it, and accordingly it hath come to paſſe. Such there were not a few in *Timothies* time. In the firſt *Centurie*, in the Apoſtles times, and ſoon after, how many of this brood? ſuch as pretending to an outward profeſſion of the Goſpel, yet were *blaſphemers* in ſome kind or other Such were *Hymeneus* and *Alexander* and *Philetus*, of whom our Apoſtle ſpeaketh, 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. 2 *Tim.* 2. 17. who *amongſt others*, (ὧν ἐστιν *of whom is Hymeneus*, &c.) *had put away Faith* (the Doctrine of Faith) *and a good conſcience: Erring concerning the faith*]. In particular, *denying the Reſurrection of the dead, ſaying that it was paſt already* Moſt probably maintaining their Error by *open invectives* againſt that Article of the Faith: whereupon the Apoſtle chargeth them with *Blaſphemie*; for the cure of which he *delivereth them up unto Satan* by the cenſure of Excommunication, 1 *Tim.* 1 20. Of this ſort were thoſe in Saint *Johns* time, of whom we finde mention,

Revel. 2. In the Church of *Smyrna* there were ſome which ſtood chargable with *Blaſphemie.* [*I know the Blaſphemy of them which ſay they are Jewes, and are not, but are of the Synagogue of Satan,* (ſaith the Spirit, *verſe* 9.) Such a generation of men there were in that Church, who ſaid they were *Jewes*, bragged of the truth of their Religion, whilſt they wanted both the inward power and outward evidences of it; being in truth the *Synagogue of Satan*, under his government, and acted by him; and (as it is probable) theſe ſlandered and reviled thoſe which were not of their way, inveighing againſt the truths of God, and ſo became *Blaſphemers*. Such there were alſo in the Church of *Pergamus*, ſome who held the Doctrine of *Balaam*, ver. 14. Others that held the Doctrine of the *Nicolaitans*, ver. 15. both heretically Blaſphemers. And ſuch alſo was that woman *Jezebel* in the Church of *Thyatira*, v. 20. *who called her ſelf a Propheteſſe*; ſome noted wicked woman, like unto that old *Jezebel*, or of the ſame name with her, or both; who *called her ſelf a Propheteſſe*, pretending (it may be) to *Revelations*, or at leaſt to a more then ordinary *meaſure of the ſpirit*, and ſo took upon her to teach and inſtruct others; and by that means, being naught her ſelf, ſhe taught others to be like her ſelf, ſeducing them both to *corporal* and *ſpiritual fornication*, *Adultery* and *Idolatry*; and that (as is moſt probable) under *Religious pretences*; which may well be called *Blaſphemy*.

To theſe Scripture inſtances we may adde thoſe other which I mentioned before; *Blaſphemers* upon record in *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*, in the firſt Century; ſuch was *Simon-Magus* the *father of Hereticks*, of whom it is recorded that he gave out himſelf to be *God*, and that it was he which *gave the Law* at Mount *Sina* unto *Moſes* in the perſon of *God the Father*; and appeared in the perſon of the *Son* in *Tiberius* his time: and deſcended upon the Apoſtles in thoſe cloven tongues of fire in the perſon of the Holy Ghoſt at the day of *Pentecoſt*: and ſo required *Divine honour* to be given to him; which accordingly it was at his coming to *Rome*, where they, who a little before had refuſed to acknowledge the Divinity of Chriſt, now give divine honour to a *ſeducing Sorcerer*, ſetting up his Image with this ſuperſcription, *Simoni deo ſancto, to Simon an holy God.* Out of his aſhes ſprung up *Menander*, in many things like unto his maſter *Simon*, but in abſurdity of monſtrous opinions far exceeding him. And after him that payre of *Hereticks*,

Auguſt. de Hæreſi.

Hereticks, *Ebion* and *Cerinthus*, who denyed the *Divinity* of Christ: The latter of which first broached the opinion of the groſſer kinde of *Chyliaſts* or *Millenaries*, about the *perſonall reigne* of Christ upon earth, viz. that *after the Reſurrection Chriſt ſhould reigne upon earth for a thouſand yeers, during which time the ſubjects of this Kingdom ſhould enjoy all kind of ſenſuall pleaſures and carnal contentments.* About the ſame time or not long after, ſprung up that infamous *Carpocrates*, from whom came that wicked generation of the *Gnoſticks*. A company of *blaſphemous Hereticks* called by the name of *Gnoſticks*, becauſe they pretended to a more then ordinary *knowledge* in dark and hidden myſteries; whoſe *opinions* and *doctrines* were ſo deteſtable, ſo abominable, that I finde ſome blaming *Epiphanius* for leaving any record of them to poſterity; they being ſuch as cannot but offend any chaſt eare to heare, or eye to read: Such as juſtly denominated them (as *Auguſtine* tels us they were called) *Borboritæ*, or *Cænoſi*, men polluted, and wallowing in the mire of all ſpeculative and practical filthineſſe. Such were there, ſome, and not a few, in thoſe *Primitive* and *pureſt times* of the Church. And ſuch there have been more or leſſe in all ages of the Church ſince.

Auguſt. de Hæreſ.

Simpſons Hiſtory of the Church. *Cent. 2. de Hæreſ.*

O that I might not ſay that ſome ſuch there are to be found in this Kingdome, in the Church at this day! But alas how is this *Prophecie* of the Apoſtles fulfilled and made good amongſt us in theſe laſt and worſt of times? [*In the laſt dayes, &c. men ſhall be Blaſphemers*]. And is it not ſo? Wherefore is it that we are met together this day? but to bewaile the *Blaſphemies*, the hideous, horrid, prodigious *Blaſphemies* which ſwarme almoſt in all places of this Nation at this day? To go about to reckon them up, would be a work as endleſſe as fruitleſſe. Nay a work in attempting whereof I ſhould deſerve the like cenſure as the aforeſaid Hiſtorian hath incurred; there being ſome, and not a few of them ſo horridly impious, that it is not fit they ſhould ever be ſo much as named among Chriſtians; Such, as ſhould I rehearſe them, I know they would make all your eares to tingle.

Not to ſpeak here of the *Blaſphemies* of many *wicked and profane perſons*, of whom we may ſay as the Spirit doth of that *great Whore*, Revel. 17. 3. they are *full of names of Blaſphemie*: not ſparing to peirce thorow, to rend and teare the ſacred *name of God* in peices by impious helliſh *Oaths* and *Imprecations*. Not regarding

regarding how contumeliouſly they ſpeak of *God*, of his *works*, of his *Religion*, *Ordinances*, *Officers*, *Image*. Such a generation there is to be found amongſt us, true *Malignants*, ſuch as *David* deſcribeth, *Pſal.* 73. 9. *They ſet their mouth againſt the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth*]: they ſpeak profanely of *God*, and of his works of *Providence*: Such is their pride that they ſpeak of every thing at their own pleaſure, without any regard either to God or man. Not unlike that *Beaſt* in the *Revelation*, *Rev.* 13. 6. of whom it is ſaid that, *he opened his mouth in Blaſphemies againſt God, to blaſpheme his name, and his Tabernacle, and them that dwelt in heaven*] So do they, they ſpare not to open their mouths in Blaſphemies againſt *God*, againſt his *Religion*, his *Ordinances*, his *Saints*, ſuch as ſerve God in holineſſe and righteouſneſſe, being *fellow-Citizens of Heaven*, and of Gods houſhold. Thus being imbittered againſt the true *Religion* of God, at leaſt againſt the *power* and *practiſe* of it, they care not how baſely they ſpeak of it, and of thoſe who hold it forth by a viſible profeſſion and practiſe; not caring what opprobrious and diſgraceful terms they caſt upon them, and all for their holineſſe ſake, for the Image ſake which they bear; which (as I have ſhewn you) is no leſſe then *Blaſphemy againſt God*, whoſe ſervants they are, and whoſe cognizance they wear. But to leave them;

The *Blaſphemie* which we are this day principally to take notice of, is the *Blaſphemy of thoſe who ſay they are Jewes, but are not*; ſuch as pretend to Religion, making an outward *profeſſion* of it, and yet are *Blaſphemers*. And are there not ſuch to be found in this Nation that I ſay not in this place)? *Profeſſors*, and yet *Blaſphemers*. Men that profeſſe to ſtand for God, and for Chriſt, and for his Religion, pretending to *more of God* then others, and yet Blaſpheme all. Would to God the charge did not lye ſo juſtly againſt ſome, and many of this kinde. Should we take a generall ſurvey of ſome particulars; what one *Article* of the Chriſtian faith ſhall we finde which is not by ſome ſuch either *denied* or *perverted*? As for *God* himſelf, though he be acknowledged in *word*, yet how is he in *truth* denied by thoſe who will not allow him to be a *diſtinct Eſſence*, ſubſiſting by himſelf? Such is the Doctrine and language of ſome. *There is no God but what is within us*. As for that Orthodox diſtinction betwixt *Eſſence* and *Perſon*, how is it exploded? The very name of *Trinity* jeared at; and

the

the thing renounced. The *Deity* of *Christ* the Son of God, as also of the *Holy Ghost*, and their *equality whith the Father*, how is it professed against? I might go on, and shew you the like in many other of the *Articles*, if not all. As also touching the *Scriptures*, which are made to be no other but a *humane breath*, and that blowing (as the wind) contrary wayes; containing in them many *silly, vaine, grosse and contrary things, the Prophets and Apostles therein (poore men) speaking according to the present tempers of their spirits* (it is their own language). And so for the *Ordinances* of God, that they are *poore and low dispensations; worthlesse, uselesse*, at least to them. All *Religious duties* in publike or private, are but *formes, bodily exercises*, meerly *legall. And there may be as much of God seen and enjoyed in any servile labour, as in the Ministery of the Word, Prayer, &c.* To these I might adde the opprobrious and disgraceful language that is poured out upon the *servants* of God; and that not only his servants at *large*, (as all true Christians are), who if they be not of *their way*, are sure to hear ill enough, what ever else they be; but also his servants in *Ordinarie*, the *Ministers* of the Gospel, who are reproached and vilified, and disgraced, and that not for any *personal miscarriages*; but with reference to their *publike capacities*, as *Ministers*; the very office it self being decryed as of no longer use in the Church of God. But I finde this work already done to my hand by others, who undertaking to give *testimony of the Truth of Jesus Christ*, have posted up some of these *Heretical Blasphemies in æternam rei Infamiam*, presenting them to the view of the world, to their eternal Infamie.

See the Testimony of the truth of Jesus Christ by the Ministers of *London, Anno* 1648. Mr. *Bartlets* Soveraigne Balsom, *in fine*.

Thus *Professours* not a few are turned *Blasphemers*. I, some who (at least in their owne apprehensions) seemed to be of the highest *forme*. I more such as have been, or have taken upon them to be *Teachers* and *Instructers* of others. So fully is *Pauls* Prophecie here fulfilled, and accomplished amongst us; never more, and more desperate *Blasphemers* of this kinde to be found in any age, in any Nation of the world then at this day in this.

Quest. But how cometh it so to passe, that this so ill, so poysonous a *weed* should thus spring and grow in this *Garden of God*? And that in this *weeding time*; in this time of *pretended*, and by many really *intended Reformation*? It will not be amisse a little to enquire into the *causes* and *occasions* of it.

Answ.

Reaſ. 1. *Deus non eſt Author cujus eſt ultor.* Fulgent. Comfort for Beleevers. &c. pag. 36, 37.

Anſw. 1. For anſwer (in the firſt place). This God *permitteth*. I do not ſay he is the *Author* of it, (That is one of the *Blaſphemies* of the Times, to make God the *Author of ſin*, and not of the *Action* only, in and with which ſin is, but of the very *Pravitie, Ataxie, Anomie, Irregularity, and ſinfulneſſe it ſelf* which is in it, in which termes it is by ſome delivered); but yet he *permitteth* it, and that with an *effectual Permiſſion*: which he doth

1. In a way of *Judgment*, puniſhing one ſin with another. Men have been *ungrateful, unfruitful, unanſwerable* to times and means, not walking worthy of the Goſpel, not prizing it, but waxing wanton under it; therefore hath God given them up after this manner. This is the Reaſon which the Apoſtle giveth why the *Gentiles* were given up to ſuch *Moral* and *Practical wickedneſſe* as they were, *Rom.* 1. 21, 24. *Becauſe when they knew God* (viz. by the light of nature) *they did not glorifie him as God*, (give that honour and reſpect unto him which they could not but apprehend due to the Divine Majeſty), *neither were thankeful*, (for thoſe common mercies which they received from his hand), *Therefore God gave them up unto uncleanneſſe, &c.*] ſo puniſhing the breach of the *firſt table* by giving them up to the violation of the *ſecond*. And for the like cauſe it is that God in his juſt judgment ſometimes giveth up men to this height of *ſpeculative* wickedneſſe, to turne *Heretical Blaſphemers*: Becauſe when they *knew God* (by the light of the Word), they did not *glorifie him as God* (by ſerving him according to his will revealed), therefore hath he thus given them up unto Satans deluſions. Whilſt the *Truth* was held forth unto them, they did not afford it an anſwerable reception. So the Apoſtle renders the reaſon of it, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 10, 11. where ſpeaking of *Apoſtates* who had made defection from the faith, *Becauſe* (ſaith he) *they received not the love of the Truth* (that is, (ſaith *Grotius*) they did not prize the love of God in holding forth his Truth, the truth of the Goſpel unto them; or rather they did not entertaine that truth, imbracing and laying it up in their hearts as they ſhould have done), *Therefore God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſion that they ſhould beleeve a lye*]. Therefore he giveth men up to the imbracing of *Heretical* and *ſoul-damning* doctrines. This God doth in a way of *judgment* to ſome.

2. And ſecondly, he doth it by way of *Probation* and *Tryal* unto others. Surely for this end is this *hour of temptation* come upon

upon the Church at this day, to *try them that dwell upon the earth*, *Rev.* 3. 10. To try the *Faith* and *Patience* and *Conſtancie* of thoſe who are ſound, and will cleave unto God, and unto his Truth. This reaſon the Apoſtle giveth why there muſt be *Hereſies* in the Church, 1 *Cor.* 11. 19. *There muſt be Hereſies* (ſaith he) *among you, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt*]. And ſo we may ſay, *There muſt be Blaſphemies*, God ſeeth it expedient to permit them, and that to this end amongſt others, that they which are δόκιμοι, *Sincere* and conſtant unto God and his Truth may be made manifeſt to themſelves and others. This is one of Gods *winnowing ſeaſons*, wherein by this wind he ſevers the ſound and weighty *corne* from the *chaff*: ſhowing who they are that are *ſtable* with him, and who are otherwiſe.

Secondly, as God permits this in *juſtice* and *wiſdome* for theſe, and other ends known to himſelf, ſo *Satan acts it*. *This hath the Enemy done* (ſaith the Husbandman in the parable concerning the *Tares* which were grown up in his *fild* among his good corne), *Matth.* 13. 28. Theſe *Tares* are *Schiſmaticks* and *Hereticks*, with their *Heretical Doctrines*, which like *Tares*, intoxicate the brains of men which will take them down. Now theſe are of *Satans* ſowing. That ἐχθρὸς ἄνθρωπος, that *envious* man (as he is there called), envying to ſee Gods corne grow and flouriſh, to ſee the proſperity of the Church, and the flouriſhing of the Goſpel, he poyſons the ground with this pernicious *Tinetare*. This he doth to croſſe and *hinder Gods work* in his Church. Even as in the rebuilding of the *Wals of Jeruſalem*, he made uſe of thoſe *Samaritans*, (pretended friends, but reall adverſaries to the Jews), to hinder the work what they could, *Ezra.* 4. 1. &c. Even ſo in this time of an intended *Reformation*, he hath ſtirred up many ſuch *Heretical ſpirits* to render all endeavours that way ineffectual. Even as God once fruſtrated that deſigne for the building of *Babel* by *dividing the languages* of the builders; ſo doth Satan now by a like practice, ſeek to hinder the building of *Jeruſalem*, the Church of God amongſt us, by dividing the *Hearts* and *Tongues*, and *Pens* of men; that whilſt ſome ſpeak the language of *Canaan*, of heaven, holding forth the *Orthodox truth* of God, others who pretend to be *builders* too, ſhould ſpeak the language of *Hell*, holding forth pernicious Errours, Heretical *Blaſphemies*.

Reaſ. 2.

Eng. New Annot.

3. Again, thus it cometh to paſſe through the *remiſſeneſſe* and *negli-*

Reaſ. 3.

negligence of those to whom the care of the Church is or should have been committed. *Whilst men slept* (saith the Parable) *the Enemy sowed Tares among the wheat*, *Matth.* 13. 25. whilst those who are, or should be, betrusted with the Church, either *fall asleep*, or are *laid asleep*, so as they do not act so vigilantly and vigorously as they ought to do for the welfare and preservation thereof, such *Tares*, such evill Instruments creep in, A truth lamentably experimented in this Nation at this day. Where, whilst the *golden reynes of Ecclesiastical Government* have been relaxed and let loose; and the *Civil sword* otherways imployed, so as Errors of an inferiour alloy have been connived at, and *de facto* tolerated, men (as the nature of sin and errour is) growing worse and worse through this Liberty, have at the length arrived at this desperate height, to *speak Blasphemies*, *write Blasphemies*, *Print Blasphemies*, daring to *pour out their Vials upon the Sun*, cast a dark foyle upon the cleerest and most comfortable truths upon the whole Religion of God.

Reas. 4. Fourthly, again, In *men themselves* we shall finde somewhat which disposeth them unto this great evill Men do not ordinarily become *Blasphemers* at the first. *Nemo repentè fit pessimus*; They climb to this height of wickednesse by certaine *degrees* and *steps*. Some of which we shall meet with in the former part of this verse, whereof the text is part. *Men shall be lovers of their own selves, &c.*] Mark how men come to be *Blasphemers*. First, they are *Lovers of themselves*, seeking their own things, their own honour, credit, preferment; making *self* the end of all their actions. And secondly, they are *Covetous*, accounting *gaine* to be *godlinesse*. And thirdly, they are *vain-glorious*, arrogating much unto themselvs, highly conceited of their own worth: And fourthly, they are *proud*, *supercilious*, despisers of others, thinking meanly of others in comparison of themselves. And being such, no wonder now they come to be *Blasphemers*. When Satan hath thus got them up to the *top of the Pinacle*, now he casts them down; having got them to the top of the Ladder, now he turneth them off, putting them upon such desperate wayes and courses (unlesse mercie step in) to their utter destruction.

Applic. Thus you see that it is so, and why it is so. That which now remaines is the *Application*. Which I shall direct first *Generally*, then *Specially*. Generally to all *Christians*: Specially to *Timothies*, the *Ministers* of the Gospel.

1. For.

1. For all Christians, *Let not them* (in the first place) *be offended at such times, such Persons.* So effended, as to like the Church of God, the Religion of God ever the worse for that. A needfull Caveat; this being a thing which men are very subject to. It is not for nothing that our Saviour pronounceth a blessing upon them who shall not be offended at him. *Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended at me, Matth.* 11. 6. This he foresaw the world would be subject to, to take offence at him, at his *personal condition*, the meanness of it, and the sufferings attending it. Herewith the *Disciples* themselves were offended. So their Master foretold it would be with them, *Matth.* 26. 31. *All ye shall be offended because of me this night*] And accordingly it came to passe. When they saw him apprehended, carried away, and used in that disgraceful manner, they began to entertaine other thoughts of him then before they had done; and fayled in the duty and respect which they ought unto him. And as at his personal condition, so at the *condition of his Church.* This men are subject to be offended at, as in regard of *troubles* and *persecutions* arising from without, (of which our Saviour speaketh in the Parable, *Matth.* 13. 21. whereby the *stony ground* setting forth the *Temporary Professor*, he giveth this character of him, that however at the first *he heareth and receiveth the Word with joy, yet when tribulation and persecution ariseth, by and by he is offended:*) So also in regard of those Pests of *Hereticks* and *Blasphemers* which are bred in the womb, and nursed up in the bosome of the Church. These are in themselves a great eye-sore, a great offence. But let them not be so to any of us Neither is there any reason they should be so. This is no other then what the *Spirit* of God hath forewarned us that it should be: And therefore forewarned us, that we should not be offended when we see it come to passe. For this end it was that our Saviour foretold his Disciples what times should follow after his departure from them; *These things have I spoken unto you* (saith he) *that yee should not be offended*, John 16. 1. And for the like cause did the Apostle here advertise *Timothy* of what manner of men the Church of God should be pestered and infested within succeeding times, that neither he nor others might be offended at that *Apostatizing generation*, so as to like the Gospel ever the worse for their sakes. *Use.* 1.

And this use let us make of this *Premonition.* There is sprung up in the bosome of this Church within these late yeers, such a generation of *Apostates, Heretical Blasphemers,* such, and so many, as scarce any age (all things considered) ever bred *Professours turned Blasphemers.* Those who had lyen in the Churches bosome sucking the sincere milk of the word from her Breasts, the Scriptures; held forth the profession of Religion in an exemplary and more then ordinary way, yet they are fallen off; now *speaking evill,* (I cannot say *of the things which they knew not,* (for then (as our Saviour said of the persecuting Jewes to whom he had preached, *John* 15.22.) *they had not had sin,*) their sin had not been so great) but of the things which they have known and approved; speaking evil of the Truths of God, which have been precious unto them; speaking evill of the *wayes* of God, wherein they have conscientiously walked; it may be even jearing at some of the most *fundamentall doctrines* and *practises* of Christian Religion; speaking evill of the *Ordinances* of God, which have been to them heretofore the avowed power of God to their salvation: Now they look upon them as poor *low dispensations, empty formalities,* things which are beneath them, and no longer usefull to them. Never such a *scandal* given, never so much dirt cast upon the face of *Religion* by any generation of men, in any place, in any age of the world, since it was called *Christian.* Well, yet let not us be offended at all this. It was a good resolution in *Peter,* (had he not taken it up in his own strength), *Though all men shall be offended at thee* (speaking to his Master) *yet will I never be offended,* Matth. 26. 33. Every of us take up the like in the strength of Divine grace assisting; Though many be, though all should be offended at the *Religion* of God, yet so will not we be. Though never so many scandals be *given* by others, yet they shall not be *taken* by us; so taken, as that we should in the least be distasted with the *Wayes* and *Truths* of God. As for *Hereticks* and *Blasphemers,* such in all ages there have been, and such there must be. So saith *Paul* of the former, *There must be Heresies* (or *Sects*) 1 *Cor.* 11. 18. And so may we say of the latter. *There must be Blasphemers* amongst us, God seeth it expedient to *permit* it, for those forementioned ends, and other ends known to himself. Let not any of us then be scandalized by it, offended at it.

Use. 2. 2. And as not offended at it, so not *disanimated, disheartned* by it.

it. A thing which Christians in this case are no lesse subject to then the former. And indeed there may seeme to be a cause for it. To see such a *flood of waters cast out of the mouth of the red Dragon*, who but may fear the carrying away the woman by it? To see such a deluge of *Heresies* and *Blasphemies* cast out of the mouth of *Satan*, who but may fear the drowning of the Church? the extinguishing of the light of the Gospel amongst us? But let not all this disanimate. It is one end wherefore *Paul* here giveth his *Timothy* warning of this desperate generation of men, that he might not be out of heart, discouraged by them, as if the Gospels cause were desperate; but rather to *steele his spirit*, and to make him so much the more couragious for God and his Truth, bearing up head against those Errors of the times (as I shall have occasion to shew you hereafter). And this use let us make of this advertisement. Now that we see it come to passe according as the Apostle here foretold it, let us not be disanimated by it. The *Husbandman* when he goeth into his field in the spring time, it may be there he espieth abundance of *Weeds* growing up amongst his corne, and so much the more by how much he hath bestowed the more *cost* upon it by manuring it; but this doth not put him out of heart. He knoweth that they will all *wither before the harvest*. Upon the like consideration let the Lords people, those which wish well unto his Religion, beat up their hearts and spirits in the midst of these *perilous* and *amazing times*. In this spring time of desired *Reformation*, there are abundance of evill *weeds*, *Heresies* and *Blasphemies*, that are sprung up in this Church of God, threatning to eate out the good corne; and for the present they are not only an *eye-sore*, an offence, but an *annoyance*, hindring not a little the growth and flourishing of it (I mean of the *Church* and *Gospel*). But here is the comfort, before the *Harvest* all these shall wither, and the good corne, the *Truth* of God, shall get the upper hand. *Magna est veritas, Great is the Truth of God, and it shall prevaile against all the dreams and fancies of men.* The earth shall swallow up all these *waters*. As it was with the waters which drowned the world in the dayes of *Noah*; when they had done the work for which they were sent, washed that sinfull generation from off the face of the earth, then they return again to that *Abysse*, that *great deep* from whence they came, *Gen.* 7. 11. & 8. 3. And so shall it be with this flood

of

of *Hereſies* and *Blaſphemies* which is broke forth upon this Nation at this day; when theſe have done the work for which they are permitted and ſent, *viz.* made manifeſt thoſe which are approved, they ſhall return again to that *Abyſſe*, that *great deep*, that *bottomleſſe pit*, the *pit of Hell*, from whence they came.

And therefore for us, let us in the mean time with *Noah* and his family, keep cloſe within the *Arke*, within the Arke of the *Church*, waiting for the abating and drying up of theſe waters; not doubting but that God in his due time will finde an *Ararat* for his poor weather-beaten Church to reſt upon. Thus be not *offended*, be not *diſcouraged* by what is come to paſſe amongſt us.

Uſe. 3. 3. But yet (in the third place) *do not over-look it, ſlight it*, as not worth the taking notice of. So do they ſeem to do which cry up the *preſent times* for ſuch *glorious times*, *ſuch happy and bleſſed times*. Now ſurely, if bleſſed *Paul* were alive in theſe times, he would not think them ſo. In his judgment ſuch times as theſe, wherein *Profeſſors turn Blaſphemers*, they are καιροὶ χαλεποὶ, *Difficult, Grievous, Perilous times, Evill times*. And I cannot but wonder how any one that hath the eye af a Chriſtian, ſhould look otherwiſe upon theſe times. The ſpirit of God in Scripture meaſureth the *goodneſſe* and *badneſſe* of *times* by the *binding* and *looſing* of *Satan*. In *Revel.* 20. *v.* 2. there we read of the *binding of Satan for a thouſand yeers, that he ſhould not deceive the Nations*. There is the proſperous ſtate and condition of the Church, a *good time*. In the ſeventh verſe of that chapter we read of the *looſing of Satan*. [*When the thouſand yeers ſhall be expired, Satan ſhall be loaſed out of his Priſon, and ſhall go out to deceive the Nations.*] There are ſad times for the Church, *Evill times*. And ſurely ſuch are the times whereinto we are fallen. How is *Satan* let looſe amongſt us, even to the deceiving of the *Elect*, if it were poſſible? How many of thoſe who have had the name of Chriſt called upon them, written upon their *foreheads*, (I, and we hope upon their *hearts* too) are deceived by the ſubtilty of Satan, and carried away even to the higheſt of Evils, even unto *Blaſphemy*. *Profeſſors turned Blaſphemers*. Surely this is no other but an *Evill* time, a *Perilous* time, a *Sad* time. So let us look upon it.

And ſo looking upon it, let us be accordingly affected with it, *mourning for the evils in theſe times*: Not ſo much for *Penal* evils, the outward *Calamities* and *Judgments* which are amongſt

us,

us, (which yet are to be laid to heart) as for the *ſinful Abominations* which are to be found in the midſt of us, which are indeed the dreadfuleſt of Judgments. Mourn we for theſe. Such, all ſuch, and only ſuch they were, whom the *Angel* had Commiſſion to mark out for temporal ſalvation and deliverance, *viz.* ſuch as *ſighed and cryed for all the Abominations that were in the midſt of Jeruſalem*, Ezek. 9. 4. For theſe ſins the Land mourns at this day; and (unleſſe God in mercy ſtep in) is like to mourn yet more then ever. For theſe let us mourn.

And as for all the reſt of the abominations, ſo for this in a ſpecial manner. The horrid and prodigious *Blaſphemies* that are to be found in the midſt of us. O let every ſoule that *heareth* them, or *heareth of them* be thus affected with them. So were the people of God amongſt the Jewes wont to be affected with this ſinne. No ſin went ſo near their hearts as this, this of *Blaſphemy*. So much they were wont to expreſſe by the *rending of their garments* at the hearing of the name of God blaſphemed. So did *Hezekiah's* Commiſſioners, *Eliakim* and the reſt; when they heard *Rabſhakeh's Blaſphemies, they rent their cloaths*, Iſa. 36. *ult*. And ſo did *Hezekiah* himſelf, when it was by them reported to him, he did the like, *chap.* 37. *verſe* 1. The like did the Apoſtles, *Paul* and *Barnabas*, when they heard the Blaſphemy of the *Lyſtrians*, crying up them for gods, *They rent their cloaths*, Acts 14. 14. This did they to expreſſe the *rending of their hearts* with grief and indignation at what they heard, or heard of. And what cauſe have we to do the like, who hear of thoſe horrid *Blaſphemies* which are ſo rife in this Nation at this day?

Eſpecially when we conſider from *whom* theſe Blaſphemies come, from what mouths they break forth. Not from *black, profane, unhallowed* mouths, from which little other language can be expected; but from the mouths of thoſe who ſtile themſelves **Saints**, ſuch as ſay they are *Jewes*, pretending to an high profeſſion, and extraordinary power of piety. Now ſurely this is no ſmall aggravation of their *ſin*, and ſo ſhould be of our *ſorrow*. The Jewes had a *Canon* (as *Ainſworth* reports it out of their *Maimonie*), that *whoſoever heard Blaſphemy of the name, whether he heard it himſelf, or heard it from the mouth of another, he was bound to rend his cloaths. But he that heard it from the mouth of a Heathen was not bound to rend his cloaths. And* Eliakim *and* Shebna.

Ainſworth in Levit 24 11.

Shebna *had not rent their cloaths* (say they), *but that Rabshaketh was an Apostate from the faith.*] Surely no *Blasphemy* to be so much laid to heart and lamented, as the *Blasphemy of Apostatized Professours.* For this mourn we, and that in a threefold respect.

1. As it is a *sin*: a heynous sin wherby the name of God is exceedingly dishonoured. The *name of God*! It should be *dear* to every Christian, even dearer then his own life. So it was to *Moses* & *Paul*, who rather desired to have their names *blotted out of the book of life*, and to be *accursed from Christ*, then that his name should suffer through the miscarriage of his people, *Exod.* 32. 32. *Rom.* 9. 3. And if so, how deeply should this affect us, to hear the name of God thus dishonoured, thus *Blasphemed* as it is?

2. As it is a *Judgment.* Many judgments there are abroad amongst us at this day which call for *Humiliation*, (deserving some of them to be bewailed with tears of blood), but none like unto this. Of all judgments none like *spiritual judgments*, judgments seazing upon the spirits of men. And such is this. A *spiritual judgment*, and that a dreadful one: that men professing the name of Christ, and pretending to Religion should be given up to such a νῦς ἀδόκιμος, such a *Reprabate mind*, a minde so voide of judgment. Here is cause of deep lamentation.

Propter talia delicta, & fames, & terræ motus, & pestes eveniunt. Vide *Alsted. Theolog. Casuum. cap.* 15. *Cas.* 5.

3. And thirdly, as it is a Prodromus *a fore-runner of judgment.* So that good Emperour *Justinian* looked upon it, who making this sin *Capital*, giveth this reason for it. *Propter talia delicta, &c.* For sins of this nature come *Famines*, and *Earthquakes*, and *Pestilences.* And surely such *black clouds* are full of *water.* Such horrid sins are full of divine wrath; threatning us in this Nation at this day, not only with *temporal plagues*, but with *spiritual judgments*, even the *removing of our Candlestick.* When so many *Dorrs* are striking at the *light*, who but may fear the putting out of the Candle? In this threefold respect mourn we for this evill as it is a *sin*, as it is a *judgment*, as it is a *fore-runner of judgment*; that so the first may be *pardoned*, the second *removed*, the third *prevented.*

Use. 4. And being thus affected with it, now *take we heed that we be not partakers in it.* This is the counsel which *Paul* giveth to his *Ephesians*, *cap.* 5. *ver.* 7. Having made mention of some wrath-provoking sins, and sinners, as *Fornicatours*, *unclean persons*, *covetous*,

vetous, &c. he ſubjoynes, *Be not yee therefore partakers with them*]. And the ſame counſel the *voyce from heaven* ſuggeſts to the people of God concerning *Babylon*, *Rev.* 18. 4. *Come out of her my people, that yee be not partakers of her ſins*]. And let the ſame counſel be acceptable unto us. We hear of many wrath-provoking ſins which are abroad, this amongſt the reſt, of *Blaſphemy*. [*Men are Blaſphemers*]. Take we heed that we be not partakers with them, partakers in their ſin, and that whether as *Principals* or *Acceſſories*.

1. As *Principals*, Leſt we alſo ſhould fall into the ſame evill. This uſe the Apoſtle Saint *Peter* maketh of the very like Premonition to that in the Text, 2 *Pet.* 2. 17. *Yee therefore beloved, ſeeing yee know theſe things before*, (know that dangerous Seducers ſhall come, ſuch as other of the Apoſtles had given them warning of, and himſelf had foretold and deſcribed, *cap.* 2. *ver.* 1. *There ſhall be falſe teachers among you, who privily ſhall bring in damnable Hereſies, denying the Lord that bought them*], Through whoſe means many ſhould be ſeduced, as it there followeth, *v.* 2, *Many ſhall follow their pernicious wayes, &c.) beware* (ſaith he) *leſt yee alſo being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſſe.*] And let the like Caveat be directed to every of us; which is not ſo *needleſſe* as ſome happily may imagin. Time was (and that not long ſince) when ſome of thoſe who are now deeply ingaged in the guilt of this ſin, would have thought themſelves as free from any danger of it as the beſt of us now can. Should one ſome few yeers ſince have come and told ſome of them, that they ſhould do thus, and thus; that they ſhould turn *Blaſphemers*, that they ſhould jeare at the *Trinity*, jeare at *Scriptures*, jeare at *Ordinances*, jeare at *Miniſters*, oppoſing the *truths* and *wayes* of God, would they not have been ready to reply as *Hazael* did to the Prophet, 2 *King.* 8. 13. What, *Are we Dogs, that we ſhould do ſuch things?* Nay, ſhould it have been told us concerning ſome of them, that we or they ſhould have done thus, would we not (with the *Apoſtles* in the like caſe) have been ready to ſuſpect our ſelves as ſoone as them? yet are they thus fallen. O let theſe their falls make us jealous over our ſelves: knowing that we alſo are made of the ſame mould, and are ὁμοιοπαθεῖς, *men ſubject to the like paſſions*, the like infirmities; Such as, unleſſe the grace of God do ſupport, are ſubject to be caried

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away as they have been. And therefore presume not upon our own strength. (This it was that brought *Peter* to *deny* and *abjure* his Master), but be jealous over our selves. Taking the Apostles advice, 1 *Cor.* 10. 12. *Let him that thinketh that he standeth take heed lest he fall*]. Many of those who are thus fallen, time was when they thought they stood, and stood fast, so as they should not have been *so soone removed to another Gospel* (as *Paul* complains of some of his Galathians, *Gal.* 1.6.) they should not have been brought to renounce and speak evil of those *truths*, and *wayes*, and *Ordinances*, and *Ministers*, which before were so dear and precious in their eyes.

Quest. *Quest.* But how shall we be *preserved* and kept from this great Evill?

Answ. A usefull Question. For your direction herein, take notice of some things to be *avoyded*, some things to be *practized*.

1. Some things beware of; *viz.* Such things as *make way for this sinne*. Such are those four particulars which precede the word in the Text, *Self love*, *Covetousnesse*, *Arrogancie*, *Pride*, Each a step to this great sin of *Blasphemy*. And therefore as we would be free from *this*, take heed of *them*.

1. Of *Self-love*. Inordinate self-love, of setting up our selves, making our selves the end of all our Actions. So the *Philosopher* defines a Self-lover, ὁ ἀυτῦ ἕνεκα πάντα πράτ]ων. One that doth what ever he doth with an eye to himself, his own profit, honour, pleasure, &c. One that *seeketh his own things*, *and not the things of another*, (contrary whereunto the Apostle willeth Christians to do, 1 *Cor.* 10, 24.) One that *seeketh his own things*, *and not the things which are Jesus Christs*, (as *Paul* complains of many (for so the word [*All*] must there be taken, πάντες pro πόλλοι, *All* for *many*) in his time) *Phil.* 2. 21. Now beware of this, of thus setting up our selves, of being thus inamoured with our selves, doating upon our selves, *Narcissus* like, to be inamoured with our own facts, our own fancies, our own opinions, so as to set up our selves above *God* and his *Word*. Which if we shall do, no wonder if in the end we come to be metamorphosed, and make bold with what ever is his, and so come to blaspheme him.

2. Beware of *Covetousnesse*; which as it is the *root of all evill*, so sometimes of this. This it was that made *Demas* forsake *Paul* and

and his way, turn his back upon both, even his *imbracing this present world*, 2 *Tim.* 4.10. This it was that made that *rich young man* turn his back upon Christ, *Matth.* 19. 22. *He had great possessions*, and they *had him*, possessing his heart. This it was that made the *Pharisees* to jeare at the Doctrine of Christ, to deride him, *Luke* 16. 14. *They heard all these things, but they derided him, For they were covetous.* And this it was that made *Judas* to betray his Master, even his *coveting those wages of unrighteousnesse*. And this, if it take possession of the heart and hold it, it will make thee, if need be, to *blaspheme* him.

3. Take heed of *Arrogancie*. Of arrogating too much to our selves (as the word there properly signifieth). Of *boasting of things without our line*, our measure, (which thing the Apostle disclaimeth, 2 *Cor.* 10. 13.) Take heed of being puffed up with an high over-weening opinion of our own *graces, gifts, parts*, whether reall or imaginary. It is *Solomons* counsel, and it is very proper in this case, *Prov.* 3. 7. *Be not wise in thine own eyes*].

'Αλαζονεία, ab ἀ intensiva, & λάζομαι Sumo

4. Take heed of that which is near akin to this, *Pride*, ὑπερηφανία: *Supercilionsnes*; of being so highly conceited of our selves, our own worth, our own abilities, as to look overly upon others, despising and contemning them, as *Golia* sometime did *David*; and as men upon a high Tower look down upon them which are below. Of all these beware.

ὑπερηφανία ab ὑπὲρ super, & φαίνομαι, appareo, quod quis enimere se & cæteris mortalibus superiorem esse persuasum habeat. Cui respondet Latinis Superbia, q. super ire. Leigh Critic. Sacra.

ὑπερήφανοι hic Contemptores aliorum. Grotius ad Text.

Surely some one or other of these it is that hath been the bane of most of these miserable *Apostates*, seducing Teachers, who are now turned *Blasphemers*. Observe them, and we shall find them to have been men deeply in love with themselves, their own opinions, in love with their own credit and reputation, men that would be *some-body* in the world; *Self-seeking* men in some kind or other. It may be they have been in love with *money*, for which they have parted with *truth*. Being men of low or desperate fortune, they have not cared by what ladder they climbed to preferment. However, this we shall generally finde amongst them, that they have been 'Αλάζονες, ὑπερήφανοι, *Arrogant, Proud; Vain-glorious, Supercilious*; men highly conceited of themselves, thinking meanly of others, specially such as were not in their own way. And by this means it is that they have now climbed up to the highest staffe of the Devils ladder, even become *Blasphemers*. That we may never split upon the same *rock*, take heed of stear-

ing the ſame *courſe*. Take heed of *Self-love*, take heed of *Covetouſneſſe*, take heed of *Arrogancie*, take heed of *Superciliouſneſſe*.

To theſe I might adde many more. I ſhall only hint unto you two or three, which are very proper to the preſent times, and preſent caſe.

5. *Take heed of renouncing Church-communion.* This *Direction* I ſhall hold forth with all reſpective tenderneſſe to thoſe upon whom it may ſeem to intrench; yet ſo as the truth of God may not be concealed or diſſembled. Take heed of *forſaking Communion with the true Churches of Chriſt, in his publike Ordinances.* This Saint *Jude* points at as an inlet unto this ſin. *Jude verſe* 19. Having minded thoſe to whom he writeth of what the Apoſtles had foretold, *how that in the laſt times there ſhould be mockers*, (ſuch as *Paul* here calleth *Blaſphemers*), he preſently addeth, *Theſe be they who ſeparate themſelves*]Ἀποδιορίζοντες ἑαυτούς, *makers of Sects* (as the *Geneva* renders it), or *Separatiſts*, men dividing and ſeparating themſelves from the true Churches of Chriſt, renouncing their Communion, *forſaking their Aſſemblies* (as the Author to the *Hebrews* deſcribeth the like Apoſtates, *Heb.* 10. 25.) and ſo (it may be) caſting off the publike Ordinances. Such (ſaith St. *Jude*) are the *Mockers*, the *Blaſphemers* of the laſt times. And is it not ſo amongſt us at this day? Who, or what are the Blaſphemers of the times? Are they not for the moſt part, ſuch as ſeparate themſelves? *Groſſe and rigid Separatiſts*, and *Sectaries*? Miſtake it not. I do not ſay that *all* thoſe who have thus ſeparated themſelves, are ſuch; (No, God hath yet kept many of them, and my prayer ſhall be yet, he may keep them from this ſo great an evill); But thoſe who are ſuch, are they not for the moſt part of that number? ſuch as have *ſeparated themſelves*, and that in a *rigid* and *bitter way* (for of ſuch I now ſpeak); renouncing Communion with the true Churches of Chriſt, crying them down for *Antichriſtian Churches, falſe Churches, no Churches.* Let it be ſeriouſly and impartially obſerved, and I ſuppoſe this will be found to be the *ordinary doore* at which this deſperate Evill hath entred, and broke in upon the Church of God in this Nation. And I dare not forbear to give you notice of it, that upon this ground you may ſo much the rather beware of it.

6. *Take heed of uſurping upon publike offices and adminiſtrations in the Church.* Being *private perſons* take heed how you take upon

up on you the office of *publike teaching*, not being called, not being ſent; how you uſurp upon the Miniſterial function. You know the ſtory of King *Uzziah*, 2 *Chron.* 26.16.& 19. How that being (as the Text ſaith) *ſtrong, and his heart lifted up*, not contented with his kingly dignity, he wou'd be uſurping upon the Prieſts office; thereupon he advanceth into the Temple, the *Holy place*, where it was not lawful for any but the Prieſt to enter; and there he attempts to offer *Incenſe*, which it was not lawfull for any but the Prieſt to do. But what was the iſſue? Why, preſently the *Leproſie roſe up in his forehead from beſide the Incenſe-Altar*]. The very aſhes of the Altar (as ſome conceive of it) flew in his face, and turned to a Leproſie. And hath not the like hapned to many amongſt us, who have been guilty of the like uſurpation? They being *ſtrong* in their own conceits, and their hearts being lifted up in the apprehenſion of their own gifts and abilities, and envying to the Miniſters of God the appropriation of their Miniſteriall functions, they have taken upon them the office of *publike teaching*, without any *miſſion*, or *Commiſſion* from God or man, ſcorning to enter at *Chriſts doore*, by the way of the *Churches orderly Ordination*. But what hath been the iſſue? Why, God hath met with them in the like manner; The aſhes of the Altar have flown in their faces, the *Leproſie of Blaſphemy* hath riſen up in their foreheads, ſo as they have become of *Orthodox Profeſſors*, *Hereticall Seducers*, indangering all that came within the breath of them with the contagion of their Doctrine. Of this kinde were thoſe *Blaſphemers* which our Apoſtle here ſpeaketh of. Such as took upon them to be *Teachers of others*, and for that purpoſe went about from place to place (as ſome and too many *circumforaneous teachers*, (like Saint *Judes Planets*, *wandring ſtars*, Jude 19.) do in all places at this day), *creeping into houſes*, and by-corners, to vent their *Heretical* and *Blaſphemous* doctrines. That you may be kept from the like evils, take heed of the like unwarrantable preſumption.

Diodati ad loc.

Miſtake it not. It is farre from my thoughts to diſcourage any in doing their duty; *Parents* in inſtructing their *children*, *Maſters* their *families*, or *Chriſtians in edifying one another in their holy faith* in a private way, whether it be by *praying* together, *conferring* together, or in helping one another in calling to minde what they heard in publike; for all which they have the Apoſtles warrant

warrant to bear them out, 1 *Thes.* 5. 11. But for *private persons* to take upon them to teach in a *publike* and *ordinary way* without any mission from the *Church*, this is the presumption which here I taxe, and look upon as rendring men so obnoxious unto this spiritual judgment.

7. To these I shall adde but one more; would you be kept from this sin? *take heed of curiosity, and inordinate affection of novelties in matters of Religion.* You know how fatall it proved to those men of *Bethshemesh*, who dared to look into the *Arke* of God; In seeing that, they saw their last, 1 *Sam.* 6. 19. Of such dangerous consequence is it when men will be prying into Gods secrets; will not be contented with what the Apostle confines Christians to, *Rom.* 12. 3. φρονεῖν εἰς το σωφρονεῖν, *to be wise* (or understand) *unto sobriety* (as those words are most properly rendred), but they will be unlocking of Gods closet, picking of his Cabinet. Being surfeted with *old* and *wholsome* Truths, they long for *Novelties*; like those *Athenians*, Acts 17. 19. who were very desirous to hear *Paul* doctrine, meerly for the newnesse of it. [*May we know what this new doctrine is whereof thou speakest?*] Being glutted with *plain* and *open* truths, they hunt altogether after *unrevealed mysteries*: not fearing to plunge themselves over head and ears in those depths where the *Elephant may swim*, nay where never any yet could finde a bottome. If such adventurous spirits be drowned in a *sea of Errors*, what wonder? *Plinie* the younger was swallowed up of his *Vesuvius*, that smoaking burning gulfe, whilst he dared to approach too nigh to finde out the cause of that Eruption. Nothing more dangerous then an overcurious disquisition and enquiry into the depths and hidden mysteries of God. Herein he spake rightly who said of himself, *Mallem ignorare sine crimine, quàm scire cum discrimine. I had rather be ignorant of what I am not bound to know, then to hazard my self in seeking to know it.* It had been well for *Eve* if she had never tasted of the *tree of knowledge of good and evill.* Some there have been who have dangerously miscarried by affecting too ambitiously to be of *Natures* privy counsel. Prying too farre into those *abdita naturæ majestatis*; seeking to finde out the secret of nature, they have lost themselves. But more by prying into *divine secrets*; overcuriously enquiring into those ever to be adored mysteries concerning the *Trinity of Persons in the unity of the Godhead*, the manner

ner of Christs *Incarnation*, &c. not suffering their *faith* to go a step farther then carnal *reason* could conduct and carry it. Here hath been the rise of *Arminian* errours, *Socinian* Blasphemies, and the Blasphemies of many other heretical spirits at this day. That you may be preserved from the like miscarriage, take that other branch of the Apostles caveat in that place forenamed, *Rom.* 12. 3. μὴ ὑπερφρονεῖν παρ' ὁ δεῖ φρονεῖν. *Do not presume to understand above that which is meet for you to understand.* Non supra scriptum, *Not above that which is written*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 6. Content your selves with *revealed truths.*

And amongst them, spend your zeale upon those which are most *necessary*, most *useful*. All truths are not of the same *alloye*, or of the same *weight*. Some more precious, more ponderous then others. Reserve your zeale for those which are of chiefest concernment, *fundamentall truths*. As for *Problematicall truths*, Controversal and Questionable points, which are agitated and discussed amongst men learned and pious, and are not of, nor near the foundation, be not over eager about them, in opposing and censuring those which are otherwise minded then your selves. And as for *Metaphysical speculations*, *Platonical Ideaes*, and other like aiery, empty notions, leave them as whetstones to sharpen young wits withall. Such *stones* are no *bread* for Christians, affording no solid soul-nourishment, and therefore not to be fed upon, but declined. So *Paul* prescribeth it by way of advice unto *Timothy*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 20. where giving him a charge to *keep that sacred depositum*, the doctrine of the Gospel which was committed to his trust as an *Evangelist*, a minister of it, to keep it himself, to transmit it to posterity as he had received it, pure and uncorrupted; in the next words he directs him how he might the better do it. [*Avoyd* (saith he) *prophane and vaine bablings, and oppositions of science falsly so called*]. *Prophane and vaine bablings*, βεβήλους κενοφωνίας, vaine contests and disputes about things which are not revealed, or are not worth the time which is lavished out upon them, not tending to spiritual edification: such as those *fables and endlesse Genealogies*, which the same Apostle speaketh of *chap.* 1. *verse* 4. of the same Epistle, which *minister questions rather then edifying*: Such profane and vaine bablings here he willeth him to avoid. *With oppositions of science falsly so called*] Ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως; Such oppositions and disputes

as are made againſt ſound doctrine by the adverſaries of the truth, who pretend to a greater meaſure of knowledge then others; (as thoſe forenamed *Gnoſticks* did, whom the ancient Greek fathers conceive the Apoſtle there to point out as it were by name). Such vaine and fruitleſſe conteſts with proud adverſaries *Paul* willeth *Timothy* there to *avoid*. In the next words ſhewing him the danger of the contrary; *Which ſome* (ſaith he) *profeſſing, have erred from the faith*]. Here is the danger of being addicted to ſuch curious, vaine and fruitleſſe ſpeculations, and ſuch endleſſe diſputes. Hereby ſome have been, others may be brought to deſert the truth of God which formerly they have profeſſed; upon this ground take we heed of this affectation.

Vide *Grotium* ad loc.

And among other things (to mind you of that alſo by the way) beware of *holding up Arguments againſt the truth*, by oppoſing *Reaſon*, or *humane Authority*, or *pretended Revelation* againſt Scripture (as the manner of ſome is). This alſo will come within the compaſſe of theſe *profane and vaine bablings*, of which this Apoſtle tels us, 2 *Tim.* 2. 16. *That they increaſe unto more ungodlines*]. Such Errors as theſe do not ſtay where they begin, but they breed Error upon Error, proceeding from leſſer to greater, till at the length they arrive even at *Blaſphemy*. But I finde my Meditations running out beyond the limits I intended them, when I took this Text in hand. To contract my ſelf, as much as I may:

2. You ſee now what things are to be *taken heed of*, that you may be preſerved from this dreadfull evill. My next work is to ſhow you what is to be *done*. Here I ſhall not multiply directions. Take ſome which I conceive to be moſt proper.

1. In the firſt place, *Labour for a diſtinct, ſound, well grounded knowledge in the principles of Chriſtian Religion*. For the moſt part *Blaſphemy* is the fruit of *Ignorance*. Theſe men (ſaith Saint *Jude*, ſpeaking of *Blaſphemers*, who *ſpeak evill of Dignities*) *they ſpeak evill of things which they know not*. Jude v. 10. And truly, ſo do *Blaſphemers* for the moſt part, they ſpeak evill of things which they know not. So did *Paul* before his converſion, he was a *Blaſphemer*, ſpeaking evill of *Chriſt* and his *Religion*, but he did it *Ignorantly*. Certainly, did men know *God* and his *Religion*, they would not dare to open their mouths againſt them *Had they known, they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory*, (ſaith *Paul*, ſpeaking of the *Princes*, the Rulers of the earth), 1 *Cor.* 2. 8.

And

And ſo may we ſay of many *Blaſphemers*; did they but know *God* and his *Truth*, they would not *Crucifie* them, peirce them thorough as they do. Labour for a wel-grounded knowledge of God and his Truth.

2. *Receive the love of the truth.* For the want of this it is that *God giveth men up to ſtrong deluſions that they ſhould beleeve lyes*, falſe doctrines, Hereſies and Blaſphemous opinions, [*becauſe they receive not the love of the Truth*, 2 Theſ. 2. 11.] They receive the truth into their *Heads*, in a *ſpeculative* way, ſo as to be *inlightned* by it, but not into their *Hearts*, in an *affective* way, to be *warmed* by it. Let not us content our ſelves with the former of theſe. Thoſe *Revolters* whom the Author to the *Hebrews* ſpeaks of, were ſuch as were once *inlightned*, Heb. 6. 4. ſuch as had *received the knowledge of the truth*, cap. 10. v. 26. It is no newes for *illuminated Doctours*, learned men to turne *Apoſtates*, *Hereticks*. Labour we to finde *heat* as well as *light*; that with the *knowledge* of the truth, we may have a *love* of the Truth. This *Love will be ſtrong as death* (Cant. 8. 6.) nothing ſhall conquer it.

3. In the third place, knowing and loving the Truth, *Walk in it*: This is the commendation which Saint *John* giveth of the children of that *Elect Lady*, *Joh.* 2. v. 4. *They walked in the truth.* This is the true Chriſtians commendation, not that he *knoweth* the Truth, or *talketh* of it, but that he *walketh* in it; *acknowledging th truth, the Doctrine which is according to Godlineſſe* (as our Apoſtle deſcribeth the doctrine of the Goſpel, 1 *Tim.* 6. 3. *Tit.* 1. 1.) and *that by reducing it to practice*, which is the trueſt acknowledgment; leading a life befitting the profeſſion of the truth, in all uprightneſſe and ſincerity. Thus *knowing God*, let *us glorifie him as God*, by walking before him in *Truth*; not daring to do any thing againſt the Truth. *We can do nothing againſt the Truth, but for the Truth*, (ſaith the Apoſtle) 2 *Cor.* 13. 8. Being thus ſincere with God, walking in the Truth, we ſhall through his grace be kept from this great tranſgreſſion.

4. But (in the fourth place), *walk humbly*. This is one of the things which the Lord requireth from his people, that they *walk humbly with their God*, Mic. 6. 8. O that every of us could but take out this leſſon! Surely the want of this it is that hath proved ſo baneful to many of our now ſeducing and ſeduced brethren. They ſeemed to walk with God; I, but they did not *walk hum-*

bly with him. Their ſouls were *lifted vp within them*, lifted up in the apprehenſion of their own graces, gifts, parts, &c. And therfore is it that God hath thus left them into the hands of this his *meſſenger* Satan, thus to be *buffeted by his Blaſphemous tentations*. Let their fall be a Caveat to us. Take we heed leſt our hearts be exalted, through the abundance of what ever ſpiritual priviledges we are made partakers of. The ſtory tels us of King *Hezekiah*, when the *Babylonian Ambaſſadours* came to congratulate his recovery from that dangerous ſickneſſe, *Iſa.* 39. he in a vain-glorious humour ſhewed them all his treaſures, that ſo the fame of his wealth and magnificence might be carried abroad to forraine Princes. But what was the iſſue? This *vainglory* proved fatal to his Kingdome, betraying all thoſe treaſures into the hands of thoſe *Babylonians*. Thus dealeth God ſometimes by his people, when they will be proud of their *ſpiritual treaſures*, making oſtentation of their gifts and graces, God leaveth them into the hands of Satan to be made a prey of by him, and for a time to be taken, and *carried captive by him at his will*, (as our Apoſtle ſpeaketh of ſome Apoſtates, 2 *Tim.* 2. 2, 26.) And therefore ſee that we walk humbly with God, thinking meanly of our ſelves, preferring others before our ſelves.

To theſe obvious directions I might adde many more. St. *Jude* furniſheth me with three or four very proper in this caſe. You ſhall finde them lying together in two verſes in his Epiſtle. Having in the 17. and 18. verſes minded thoſe to whom he writes of what our Apoſtle here warneth *Timothy*, [*But beloved, remember ye the words which were ſpoken before by the Apoſtles of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, how that they told you there ſhould be mockers in the laſt times*], Profeſſors ſome of them ſhould turn Blaſphemers, ſpeaking evill of, and mocking at the Truths and wayes of God, which formerly themſelves had profeſſed and walked in: In the 20. & 21. ver. he ſubjoyns and layeth down ſome directions whereby Gods faithful people might be preſerved from the like evill. [*But ye beloved, build your ſelves on your moſt holy faith, &c.*] In which two verſes we may take notice of a fourfold direction, each uſeful to our preſent purpoſe.

1. *Build up your ſelves on your moſt holy faith*]. *Faith*, the Doctrine of Faith (for of that the Apoſtle there ſpeaketh) is the foundation on which Chriſtians are laid and built. *Yee are built*

upon

upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner ſtone, (ſaith *Paul* to his Epheſians) *Eph.* 2. 20. that is, upon the Doctrine of the *Goſpel*, the Doctrine of *Faith* and *Holineſſe* contained in their writings. Now being laid upon this foundation, built upon this *faith*, they are as *living ſtones* to build up themſelves upon this faith. Not ſeeking for any other foundation, (*other foundation can no man lay* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *then that which is laid*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 11.) not queſtioning the truth and ſoundneſſe of this Goſpel foundation, they are with confidence and reſolution to build upon it; and to *build up themſelves on it*, endeavouring to advance themſelves in their ſpiritual eſtate upon this foundation. And this do you (Brethren) who would be preſerved from the Apoſtacie of the times. That foundation which you have been built upon, that *Doctrine of Faith and Holineſſe* which hath been preached unto you, and received by you, this is the *foundation of the Prophets and Apoſtles*; and other foundation can no man lay, then what hath been laid amongſt you; If any ſhall pretend to do it, though it were an *Angel from Heaven*, Pauls *Anathema* will light upon him, *Gal.* 1. 8. And therefore build you your ſelves on this foundation, with confidence and full aſſurance build upon this doctrine, as the infallible truth of God; adventuring your ſalvation, laying the weight of your ſouls upon it. As the ſtones of the building lay all their weight upon the foundation, firmly and immovably reſting upon it: So do you reſt upon that *Doctrine* which you have learned. Not calling in queſtion any of the *Principles* of your Religion, any of the fundamental truths of the Goſpel. This *Scepticiſme*, queſtioning Principles of Chriſtianity, ſpecially if they ſhall be arraigned at the bar of humane *Reaſon*, it maketh way for *Apoſtacie*, and in the end (as experience hath made it good upon ſome) for *Atheiſme*. And therefore in this ſenſe *Lay we not again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith towards God, of the Doctrine of Baptiſmes, and of laying on of hands, and of the Reſurrection of the dead, and Eternall Judgment*, (as the Apoſtle dehorts) *Heb.* 6. 1, 2. This do ſome at this day, who call all theſe and all other fundamentals of Chriſtian Religion into queſtion. Let not us dare to do it. But, *leaving the principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt*; (leaving them as we found them, immovable and unſhaken, taking the Principles of our Religion for indubitable and

unqueſtionable truths) *let us go on to perfection in knowledge and practiſe*; ſo buiding up our ſelves on this our moſt holy faith, going on forwards from *faith to faith*, from one degree of faith and holineſſe to another. Not *looking back* (as *Lots wife* did, for which ſhe is made exemplary to all *Apoſtates*, being turned into a *pillar of ſalt* to ſeaſon and preſerve others), but go on untill we come to the *Mount of God*, untill we come to ſee what we have beleeved, and ſhall receive the end of our Hope, the ſalvation of our ſouls.

2. The ſecond direction followes, [*Praying in the Holy Ghoſt*]. This is one of the pieces of the *Chriſtian Panoplie*, of that compleat ſpiritual Armour which the Apoſtle willeth the Chriſtian ſouldier to take up, and make uſe of, *Epheſ.* 6.18. *Praying always with all prayer and ſupplication in the ſpirit*]. This piece of Armour *Paul* himſelf made uſe of againſt thoſe *buffetings of Satan*, (ſuppoſed to be *Blaſphemous temptations*); he betook himſelf to his prayers; *For this thing I beſought the Lord thrice*, 2 *Cor.* 12.8. *i. e.* frequently, and importunately. And the like uſe make we of it at this day. This is a time wherein *Satans fiery darts* fly abroad, never thicker, never more dangerouſly. Let us therefore all of us betake our ſelves to our prayers, *Praying in the Holy Ghoſt*, ſolliciting the throne of grace with frequent importunity, that God himſelf would ſtand by us, and deliver us from every evill work. Thus being jealous of our ſelves and our owne weakeneſſe, fly we under the ſhadow of the wings of a divine protection; dayly begging it from God that he would deliver us *from the ſnare of the fowler, and from this noyſome peſtilence*; So as *though a thouſand ſhould fall at our ſide, and ten thouſand at our right hand, yet it may not come nigh us*; but that through his grace we may *be kept from falling, and be preſented blameleſſe before the preſence of his glory*, which Saint *Jude* aſſureth the beleevers of his time, that God was able to do for them. *Jude* 24.

3. *Keep your ſelves in the love of God*]. A direction which may be taken and underſtood three wayes, and each uſeful to our preſent purpoſe.

1. Keep your ſelves in the love of God, viz. *Gods love to you*. Being in grace and favour with God, and having ſome comfortable apprehenſions thereof, take heed of doing ought that ſhould cauſe God to turne his face from you, to withdraw the light

light of his countenance, the ſenſe and feeling of his love and favour from you, or cauſe him to frowne upon you. This will every preſumptuous ſin, every ſin againſt light and conſcience, do. Every ſuch a ſin will be like a dark cloud coming betwixt the Sun and the earth, intercepting the light of Gods countenance. So did *Davids* ſin, *Pſal.* 51. Whereupon he begs a *reſtoring of the joy of his ſalvation.* O therefore, being in the love of God, *keep your ſelves in it,* Be afraid to offend him, leſt he ſhould hide his face from you, and ſo ſuffer you to wander in the dark, and ſo to ſtumble and fall.

2. Keep your ſelves in the love of God, viz. *your love to God.* Finding your hearts once cloſing with God, and a cleaving to him, now perſevere in that love; labouring to finde your hearts more and more inamoured with him, more enlarged towards him. This love of God and of Jeſus Chriſt will preſerve the ſoul from making defection from him and his truth. This it was which cauſed *Paul* to *keep faith and a good conſcience*, ſo as he could do nothing againſt the truth; *the love of Chriſt conſtrained him*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14.

3. Keep your ſelves in the love of God, viz. *in a fraternal love*, love to the Brethren, which may be called the *love of God*, in as much, Firſt, as it is *commanded* by him; and Secondly, *wrought* by him, (in both which reſpects he is called the *God of love*, 2 *Cor.* 13. 11.) and Thirdly, it is *for his ſake*. In this love of God *keep your ſelves*, not ſuffering your hearts to be divided, alienated from, much leſſe ſet againſt thoſe who are members of the ſame body. This *oppoſition*, or *alienation* will increaſe unto more ungodlineſſe. Keep your ſelves therefore in the love of God.

4. The fourth and laſt direction is yet behinde *Looking for the mercie of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternall life*]. A uſefull direction, ſpecially in difficult and dangerous times, wherein Chriſtians are in danger of being *compelled to blaſpheme*, to renounce, and abjure the truths of God, which they hane profeſſed, through the rigour of cruel and mercileſſe perſecutors who have got power into their hands: which was the caſe (as I ſhowed you) of ſome of thoſe *Primitive Chriſtians* which perſecuting *Paul* had to deale with, *Acts* 26. 11. Now in ſuch times, wherein men can expect no *mercy*, (nor yet *juſtice*) nothing but extremity of rigour from men, now look for the *mercy of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*: who

taking

taking notice of the *patience* and *constancie* of his Saints in maintaining his truth, will not be wanting to them in a gracious remuneration, *Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me* (saith that *Amen*, that faithful and true witnesse, the Lord Jesus) *Rev.* 22.11. Christ ere long will come; and when he cometh, he will not come empty-handed. *He will give to every man according to his works* (as it there followeth). And therefore (as the verse foregoing hath it), *Let him that is righteous be righteous still, and he that is holy let him be holy still*]. Have we owned God and his truths, and appeared for them by profession and practice? Do we so still. So doing, what ever we meet with from men, we shall be sure of the *mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

And thus have I (with what brevity I could) presented unto you some useful *directions*, which may be as *preservatives* unto you against the *poyson of those Heretical Blasphemies* of seducing Teachers and Apostatized professours, which are so rife in this Church at this day, whereby you may (through the mercy of God) be kept from the infection of them, from partaking in them as *Principals*.

But this is not enough. *Take heed* (in the second place) *lest you partake herein as Accessories*. Here is the second part of this Admonition, which I beseech you give eare unto, as that which in some branch of it will concerne every of you. This is *Pauls* Caveat to *Timothy*, 1 *Tim.* 5.22. *Be not partaker of other mens sin; Keep thy selfe pure*]. Pure, not only from being a *Principal* in them, but also an *Accessory* to them, (of which latter the Apostle there properly speaks, as I shall shew you anon). And let the same counsel be as acceptable to all of us as it is in it self seasonable and needful. Take we heed of partaking in this great and dreadful evil of *Heretical Blasphemies*, not only as Principals in it, but as *Accessories* to it. Which men may be many wayes. Give me leave to instance in some of the most obvious, that you taking notice of them, may the better decline them.

1. *By countenancing of them.* This I take from Saint *John* in his second Epistle, *ver.* 10, 11. *If there come any among you, and bring not this Doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; For he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evill deeds*]. A passage which speaketh home to the point in hand. Reflect upon it again. *If there come any unto you and bring not*

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this Doctrine], that is, bring a contrary doctrine, contrary to the doctrine of which he ſpeaketh in the verſe foregoing, the Doctrine of Chriſt, [*receive him not into your houſe*] lodge him not, entertain him not: [*neither bid him God ſpeed*] ſhew him no countenance, give him no encouragement: [*for he that biddeth him God ſpeed, is partake of his evill deeds*], maketh himſelf *acceſſory* to his ſin by this collateral conſent and allowance, by ſeeming to approve of what he ought to reprove.

2. If by countenancing, much more by *impowring* ſuch manner of perſons. This I take up from the Apoſtle writing to *Timothy* in the place forenamed, 1 *Tim.* 5. 22. where he giveth him this Caveat, *Lay hands ſuddenly on no man*, viz. in *Ordination* (ſo it is moſt commonly, and moſt properly expounded). Herein *Paul* willeth *Timothy* to be adviſed, ſo as not to have any hand in inſtalling any into any *Eccleſiaſticall function*, who were not approvable both for *Doctrine* and *life*. Adding this for a Reaſon; *Neither be partaker of other mens ſins*]. *Timothy* by ordaining, impowring of an Heretical falſe teacher, giving him an advantage to ſpread his falſe doctrine with authority, ſhould make himſelf acceſſory to all that miſchief which ſhould redound unto the Church by ſo pernicious an Inſtrument.

A point which I wiſh it might be taken notice of by all thoſe who have or may have power to impower others, whether in a *Civil* or *Eccleſiaſtical* way, to promote and inſtall any in any place or office of publike truſt, whether in the *Church* or *Commonwealth*. If ſo be they be men of dangerous and poyſonous principles, ſuch as thoſe *Heretical Blaſphemers* I have been ſpeaking of, let them take heed how they *lay hands on them* (unleſſe it be in ſecuring their perſons from doing any farther harme); how they have any hand in putting advantages into their hands, wherby they may ſpread the contagion of their Errours to the indangering of the ſouls of others. In ſo doing they ſhall make themſelves partakers of their ſin, *acceſſories* to all the evill that accrueth to the Church of God by their means.

3. A third way is by *tolerating* and ſuffering of ſuch. This I take from the Spirit writing to the *Churches*, *Rev.* 2. Writing to the Church of *Pergamus*, he layeth this to the charge of the Angel there, that he *had in that Church them which held the doctrine of* Balaam, *ver.* 14. *and them which held the doctrine of the* Nicolaitans,

Nicolaitans, *verſ.* 15. *Pertinacious* Hereticks, for ſo much the word there imports, κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν, ſuch as *held faſt* thoſe doctrines. So the ſame word is tranſlated in the verſe foregoing, *ver.* 13. *Thou holdeſt faſt my name*, κρατεῖς τὸ ὄνομα μου And ſo the word here ſignifieth, an obſtinate and pertinacious holding of thoſe heretical doctrines, (which properly maketh an *Heretick*). Such Hereticks there were ſome in that Church. But what was that to the *Angel*, the Miniſter, or Officers in that Church? Yes, Ἔχεις, *Thou haſt them*, i. e. thou tolerateſt and ſuffereſt them, not proceeding againſt them according to that authority committed unto thee. So you have it more plainly in that charge againſt the Church of *Thyatira*, v. 20. *I have a few things againſt thee, becauſe thou ſuffereſt that woman* Jezebel, *which calleth her ſelf a Propheteſſe, to teach and ſeduce my people*. This TOLERATION, where that power which God hath committed to any for the ſuppreſſing, reforming, or puniſhing of ſuch Heretical Blaſphemers, is not put forth, but they are connived at, born with, this involves thoſe who are herein failing in their duty, in the guilt of that ſin, maketh them acceſſories to it. The Ruſe is ancient and true, *Qui non vetat peccare cum poſſit jubet*, who ſo having power to prohibit or hinder an evill, ſhall not put forth that power, maketh himſelf (at leaſt) acceſſory to it. This do *Church-officers* in the *ſtate Eccleſiaſtical*; Having liberty to exerciſe that power which Jeſus Chriſt hath committed to them for the edification of his Church under himſelf, if they ſhall not put it forth for the ſuppreſſing of ſo great an evill as this, they thereby become acceſſories to it. And ſo doth the *Civill Magiſtrate*, being by Gods appointment *keeper of both Tables*, if he ſhall not draw forth the *ſword* which God had put into his hand, for the vindicating of the name and cauſe of God againſt theſe open and profeſſed enemies of it, for the *Puniſhing of Blaſphemers* according to the power and authority committed to him: by this whether *voluntary*, or *negligent Toleration* and connivance, he involveth himſelf in the guilt of this ſin.

Queſt. Happily ſome by the way may interrupt me, and demand of me, *What puniſhment is due unto this ſin.*

Anſw. Give me leave to turne aſide a little to returne them an Anſwer. For the right ſtating whereof we muſt diſtinguiſh. There are divers kinds of *Blaſphemies* and *Blaſphemers*. To follow the

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Caſuiſt

Caſuiſt *Alſted*; there are two kinds of *Blaſphemy*; the one *Immediate*, the other *Mediate*. *Immediate*, which ſtrikes directly at God himſelf, denying him to be, or to be ſuch a one as he hath revealed himſelf; or attributing ſomething to him which is inconſiſtent with his nature, or highly diſhonorable to his Majeſty. *Mediate*, which doth only obliquely, indirectly, interpretatively, & by conſequence redound to him, and reflect upon him: As when his *Image*, *Word*, *Works*, *Ordinances* are contumeliouſly ſpoken of, which redoundeth unto *God* the *Prototype*, and *Author* of them.

Alſted. Theol. Caſuum. cap. 15. Caſ. 5. De Blaſphemiâ.

Again, *Blaſphemy* is either of *Infirmity*, or *Pertinacie*. Of *Infirmity*, which is ſudden, and occaſioned through the *diſtemper* of ſome *paſſion*, or the violence of ſome *temptation*. Of *Pertinacy*, when men in cold blood do adviſedly blaſpheme the name of God; or when they do κρατεῖν, pertinaciouſly and obſtinatly maintain ſome damnably Heretical and Blaſphemous doctrines.

Now according to the *quality*, *kind* and *degree* of this ſin, ſo is the *puniſhment* to be proportioned. As for *Immediate Blaſphemy* againſt God himſelf, the divine law maketh it *capital*. You may read it, *Levit.* 24. where *Moſes* enquiring of God concerning the *Blaſphemer*, which was then in ward, what they ſhould do with him, the Lord returns him an anſwer, both concerning him, and all others in the like caſe, *ver.* 13, 14, 15, 16. *The Lord ſpake unto* Moſes, *ſaying, Bring forth him that hath curſed without the Camp, and let all that heard h m lay their hands upon his head, and let all the Congregation ſtone him. And thou ſhalt ſpeak unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, Whoſoever curſeth his God, ſhall bear his ſin. And he that blaſphemeth the name of the Lord ſhall ſurely be put to death.*] Here is the *Divine Law*, which hath been followed by the *Civil Law*. *Blaſphemi ultimis ſuppliciis afficiantur*. Blaſphemers, let them be puniſhed with *capital puniſhments*, with *death*. Others have adjudged this ſin to be puniſhed with *cutting off*, or *plucking out the tongue*, And that (ſaith *Aretius*) moſt deſervedly. For unworthy is that tongue ever to ſpeak more, that ſhall dare once to ſpeak againſt its Creator.

Vide *Alſted.* ibid. *Jura Civilia præciſi ne linguæ punierunt aliquando hoc peccatum, &c. Alii ut terribilior eſſet pœna, juſſerunt per occiput eximi linguam.* Aretius Loc. Com. 109. *de Blaſphemiâ.*

Afterwards the *Canon Law* hath relaxed, and mitigated the puniſhment, commuting it into pecuniary *Mulcts* and *Penances*, &c. But by what Authority it hath taken upon it thus to diſpence with the *Divine Law*, it cannot be ſaid. Sure it is, this unwarrantable lenity hath been no ſmall advantage unto the ſin. As for the *Law of*

 God

Jura Canonica pessimo exemplo induxerunt mitigationem pœnarum, &c. Dedit enim ista tantam Blasphemiarum segetem ut nihil frequentius sit inter Christianos, quàm impunè nomen domini Blasphemare. Aretius. ibid.

God, it is expresse and peremptory; *He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death*; which being understood of *manifest and notorious Blasphemies*, where God himself is peirced or struck through, (as the word there used (*Nakab*) properly signifieth, and that by a person that is *Compos mentis*, in his right wits, is an *universal law* for all Nations, being indeed of the *law of nature*. So much is collected by some from those words of *Jobs wife* to her husband, *Job* 2.9. (being read as our Translation renders them, *Curse God, and dye*; Intimating that by that means he should soone be dispatched, cut off by the sword of the Magistrate. A construction taken from a not improbable supposition, *viz.* that the very *light of nature* did carry those heathenish Nations to as high and severe a revenge against the highest sin, as the law of *Moses* did the Israelites. It was *natural divinity* that taught the *Athenians* to adjudge their *Socrates* to death for some dishonourable and contumelious language against their gods. And so much our judicious *Perkins* observes from that Decree of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Dan.* 3 29. who, though a Heathen, yet gave in commandment to his people concerning the *God of Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego*, being convinced that he was the only true God, that if any one *Blasphemed* him, spake any thing amisse concerning him, *that he should be cut in peices, and his house made a dung-hil*]. (From whence the aforesaid Author collects, that *manifest and convicted Atheists, if they be put to death, they have but their deserts*). This did that conscientious Heathen by the light of nature.

Vide M. *Carill.* in Job. 2.9.

Perkins in Gal. cap 3. v. 25

A precedent which will rise up in judgment against many *Christian Magistrates* at the last and great day, who, notwithstanding that they have not only the same *law of nature*, but the *written law*, the law of the Word to go before them, to direct and beare them out, yet they can suffer the name of God to be peirced and struck through, and that in a presumptuous way by manifest and notorious Blasphemies, and yet connive at it, not drawing forth the sword to avenge the quarrel of their Creator. *Egregiè profectò vicarii & vasalli Dei*! (saith *Alsted* speaking of such); full well do they deserve to be called Gods *Deputies* and *Vicegerents*, who whilst they are most tender of their own *names*, their own *honors*, their own *priviledges*, they care not how the name of God suffer by impious and blasphemous tongues. *Immediate Blasphemy* is *Capital*, deserving death by the law of God, and by the law and light of Nature.

Alsted. ubi supra.

Object.

Object. But if ſo, how came *Moſes* to be at a ſtand concerning that *Blaſphemer*, that he ſhould ſo ſolicitouſly enquire of God what he ſhould do with him?

Anſw. To this it is anſwered. This *Moſes* did not out of any ſcruple that he had, whether he deſerved death or no. Well did he know what ſentēce of the *law* had paſſed upon thoſe which ſhould curſe their father or mother, *Exod.* 21.17. *He that curſeth his father or mother ſhall ſurely be put to death*]. And conſequently he could not make a queſtion whether *Blaſphemy againſt God* deſerveth the like, or no. But his ſcruple was about the *kind of death*, which in as much as God had not determined in particular, he made a queſtion whether that which was inflicted for a far leſſe offence, were not too light for this. *Blaſphemy* being the *higheſt ſin* deſerveth to be puniſhed *extremis ſupplicijs* (as the phraſe of the Civil law is) with the *higheſt kind of puniſhment*. So doth *Immediate Blaſphemy*.

As for *Mediate* and *Immediate* Blaſphemy, it is to be weighed and conſidered according to the aforeſaid *Modification & reſpects*; whether it be *ſudden* or *deliberate*; whether of *infirmity*, or *pertinacy*; and accordingly the puniſhment is to be qualified. So much we may learn from St. *Jude*, who ſpeaking of ſuch kind of perſons, willeth Chriſtians, *of ſome to have compaſſion, making a difference*, *Jude v.* 22. yet ſo as the ſin ought not to be connived at, not paſſed by. Specially in *confirmed, habituated* and *preſumptuous blaſphemers*, ſuch as do adviſedly or cuſtomarily utter, or obſtinately maintaine what tends to the high diſhonour of God. In this caſe the name of God calleth for a vindication from them who do not beare the ſword for nought: who if they ſhall now connive at *offences* and *offendors* of this nature, ſuffering them to go unpuniſhed, in ſo doing they make themſelves partakers of the ſin, *Acceſſories* to it. This do publike perſons by *Tolerating*, not *Puniſhing*.

4. And this (in the fourth place, to haſten in that which remains) may private perſons do, *by not reproving*, or ſhewing their diſlike, and deteſtation of this ſin. Not *Reproving* of it. *Have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſſe, but reprove them rather*; So the Apoſtle layeth down the general Injunction, *Eph.* 5.11. agreeably to that Preſcription in the Law, *Levit.* 19.17. *Thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy neighbour, and not ſuffer ſin upon him*]. This are Chriſtians to do with a *wiſe and holy zeale*; as in other caſes, ſo in this, making uſe of ſeaſonable *Admonitions* and *Reprehenſions*, where

there is any hope they may take place. Otherwise the Rule is, *Cast not pearls before swine*, Matth. 7. 6. *Rebuke not a scorner lest he hate thee*, Prov. 9. 8. Persons desperately wicked and profane are not to be dealt withal in this way. Admonitions and Reprehensions so *spent*, will be *miss-spent*; Nay, it may be, prove like *oyle* to the *fire*, *inflaming* instead of *quenching*. Upon this ground it was that *Hezekiahs Commissioners* when they heard *Rabshakeh* blaspheming in that desperate way, *they answered him not a word*, Isa. 36. 21. deeming it in vain to make any reply, when it would but incite him to farther outrage. But where there is any hope that reproofs may be hearkned to, Christians may not be tongue-tyed, they ought to speak for God.

However, some way or other they are to manifest their dislike and detestation of this sin. It was a *Canon* amongst the Jewes (as I hinted it before), that *whosoever heard Blasphemy of the name of God, whether he heard it himself, or heard it by the report of another, he was bound to rend his cloaths*. And so did those *Ambassadors* (as I told you), though they held their peace, yet they rent their garments. This *Ceremony* was *Jewish*, but the *Moral* and meaning of it is *Christian*. Christians ought not to have the name of God blasphemed, but they ought some way or other to manifest their detestation of it, and indignation against it. Which not doing, they may seem to approve of what they do neither by *word* nor *signe* reprove, and so may become *Accessories* to this highest of sins.

5. Again (in the fifth place) this may be done by a *voluntary associating with such kind of persons*, entertaining unnecessary familiarity or society with them. This Christians may not do. It is *Pauls* charge to his *Corinthians* concerning scandalous persons in general, that they should not *company* with such, not eat with them, 1 *Cor*. 5. 9. 11. that is, not have any intimate and unnecessary familiarity with them. The like the same Apostle requires from his *Thessalonians*, 2 *Thess*. 3. 14. *If any man obey not our word* (receive not our doctrine, but oppose it) *note that man, and have no communion with him, that he may be ashamed*. And the like direction he giveth to *Timothy* concerning these *Blasphemers and Seducers* in the fifth verse of this chapter (2 *Tim*. 3. 5.) *From such turn away*; ἀποτρέπου, i. e. ἀφομίλει, have no society, no communion with them. This would not St. *John* have with that blasphemous Heretick *Cerin-*

rinthus, whom when he espied washing himself in the *Bathe*, he refused to enter into the same place, fearing lest the roof should fall on his head which covered so wretched a miscreant, (as it is reported from *Policarpe* by *Ireneus* & *Euseb.*). And this ought not Christians to have with men of the like spirit. If a man have a *Plague-sore* upon him, they who take notice of it shall not need to be disswaded from keeping him company. Now surely the contagion of *Heretical Blasphemy* is no lesse dangerous to the soul, then the *Pestilence* to the *Body*. Besides, intimate and unnecessary familiarity with the sinner carrieth with it a seeming *approbation* of the sin, and so maketh a man accessory to it; and in that respect to be declined. The *Garment spotted by the flesh* ought not to be touched, nor come nigh, *Jude* 23.

Ireneus lib. 3. cap. 3. *Euseb.* lib. 4. cap. 14. & lib. 7. cap. 23

6. Again (in the sixth place) Christians may be made accessories to this sin, *by not mourning for it*. Thus are all Christians to be affected with the *scandalous fals* of their brethren. *Paul* blameth his *Corinthians*, that taking notice of that *Incestuous* person, they were yet *puffed up, and had not rather mourned, that he who had done that deed might be taken away from among them*, 1 Cor. 5. 2. In not doing it they make themselves accessory to the sin. So did all they in *Jerusalem* who did not mourn for the sins of the times. And so do they in *England* at this day, who hearing of such horrid *Blasphemies* as are dayly belched out against the God of heaven, against his *Truth*, his *wayes*, his *Ordinances*, and being called upon to humble their souls for them, are yet puffed up with an apprehension of such *glorious* times, such *happy* and *blessed* times; and do not rather *mourn*, mourn for the sin, that so the *offendors* might either be *reformed*, or *punished*.

7. In the last place (to name no more) Christians may be accessory to this sin by being *occasions* of it. This is that which is charged upon *David*, 2 *Sam.* 12. 14. By those foul sins of his he had given great occasions to the *enemies of God to blaspheme*. And this the Apostle chargeth upon those *Jews*, who making their boast of the Law, yet walked contrary to it by open violations of it, *The name of God* (saith he) *is blasphemed amongst the Gentiles through you*, Rom. 2. 24. And thus is the *Religion* of God subject to be blasphemed through the *scandalous lives* of Christians. When they shall walk contrary to their Professions, profane persons will be ready to cast this in the face of their Religion. Lo what a Religion is this which

yeeldeth

yeeldeth ſuch fruits! So as by theſe means they become acceſſory to the *Blaſphemy* of others. Which let all of us beware of. A Caveat preſſed by our Apoſtle onee and again, 1 *Tim.* 6. 1. *Tit.* 2. 5. And let every of us take it home to our ſelves, making uſe of it; Eſpecially in theſe *catching times*, wherein many lye in wait for ſuch occaſions, that they might have ſomewhat to caſt in the face of the true *Religion* of God, and thoſe who ſhew themſelves conſtant in the profeſſion of it. Be we ſo much the more watchful over our wayes, over our walkings, that ſo we may be no wayes acceſſory to theſe their *Blaſphemies*.

And thus have I at length diſpatched this uſeful and neceſſary *caveat* concerning this great and wrath provoking evil of the times. Take heed that we be not *partakers* in it, whether as *Principals* or as *Acceſſories*.

Uſe. 5. And thus waſhing our own hands of the ſin, now do what we may for *others*, for our *brethren*, for the *Church* of God amongſt us.

1. For our *Brethren*, which are of two ſorts, ſuch as are *fallen*, ſuch as yet ſtand. A word for each.

1. For the former, do what we may for their *Recovery*. A duty incumbent upon all, who themſelvs ſtanding upon the ſhoar, ought to reach forth a hand to thoſe whom they ſee ſwiming in the ſtream. When *Abraham* heard how his kinſman *Lot* was taken and carried away captive, preſently he arms himſelf, and maketh out for his reſcue, *Gen.* 14. Do we the like for our brethren, whom we ſee or hear of to be thus *taken captive* by the devil, & carried away at his pleaſure. O do what we may for their reſcue, their recovery.

Queſt. What ſhall we do for them?

Anſ. Herein hearken to St. *Jude*, who having firſt ſhewed Chriſtians what they are to do for *themſelvs* in ſuch Apoſtatizing times, *Keep your ſelves in the love of God*, v. 21. Then he directs them what to do for others, ſuch as are carried away with the errors of the times, v. 22, 23; *Of ſome* (ſaith he) *have compaſſion, making a difference. And others ſave with fear, pulling them out of the fire*]. And this let all of us do concerning our ſeducing and ſeduced brethren. *Putting a difference betwixt the one and the other; On ſome have compaſſion*, viz. of weak, wel-meaning, ſimple, ſeduced ſouls, ſuch as follow their ſeducing teachers (as thoſe 200 men did *Abſolom*, 2 *Sam.* 15. 10.) *in the ſimplicity of their hearts*, being carried away by their plauſible pretences, and ſpecious gloſſes which they ſet upon their falſe

false and damnable doctrines, *On such have compassion*, (as praying for them, so) seeking their recovery by gentle means, gentle *admonitions, instructions, reprehensions*; endeavouring to hold forth a light unto them, to convince them of their wandrings, and to direct them into the way of truth again, from whence they have so dangerously gone aside. Thus deal with them as tender-hearted Surgeons do with dis-located or dis-joynted bones, handle them with a gentle hand, *restoring them* (as the Apostle alluding to that Metaphor exhorts, *Gal.* 6.1.) *with a spirit of meekness*.

As for others, *pertinacious and obstinate Hereticks*, perverse and proud seducers, or men confirmed and hardned in their blasphemous errors, if it may be, *save them also*. As much as in us lies be instrumental in their salvation. But they are to be proceeded with in another way, in a way of *severity*. [*Save them with fear*] terrifying them by thundring out the judgments of God against them; where other means avail not, making use of the sharper and severer *censures* of the Church. In this case, where those milder remedies of *admonition*, and *suspension* will not take place, the highest censure of *Excommunication* is seasonable. This is the Churches last *remedy*, prescribed by the Apostle in the like case unto the Church of *Corinth* to be used towards their *Incestuous brother*, 1 Cor. 5. 5. *I have judged* (saith he) *that he who hath done this deed, be delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*] And what *Paul* prescribeth, himself practiseth in the case we have now in hand. Having to deale with a payre of blasphemous Apostates, *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, he betaketh himself to this as the last and only means left for their recovery; *I have delivered them unto Satan* (saith he) *that they may learn not to Blaspheme.*] 1 *Tim.* 1. *ult.* meaning thereby the sentence of *Excommunication*, (as appeareth by comparing this with the former Text): A *censure* which if rightly dispensed (however the ill managing of it in former times hath rendred it contemptible in these) would be found a terrible *thunderbolt*. So it was found by many in the Primitive times, where those which were struck with this *censure* were oft-times given over by God into the hands of *Satan* to be *buffeted*, vexed and tormented by him both in their *spirits* and *bodies*, with inward horrors and terrors, & with outward diseases. And truly, were the right use of this Censure restored unto the Church, I doubt not but this *twig of Christs rod* would be found

Vide New Annot. *Eng.* in 1 Cor. 5. 5.

to

to have ſome *power* in it; God would manifeſt himſelf in & by this Ordinance, ſo as to make it an effectual means for the recovering of ſome who are dangerouſly fallen, and for the ſtaying of others who are in danger of following them, and ſo conſequently for the ſtopping of the courſe of this and the like evils, which for want hereof are like to increaſe and multiply to the eminent hazard of ſouls, and endangering of the Church.

Thus are theſe *Hymeneus's* and *Alexanders*, deſperate Apoſtates and Seducers to be dealt with, *ſaved with fear*, even *pulled out of the fire* (as it there followeth). Thus dealeth the tender-hearted mother by her young child which ſhe ſeeth to be fallen into the fire, ſhe layeth hold where ſhe can, plucking it out haſtily and violently, not caring though ſhe endanger a *limb* to ſave the *life* of it. And thus are this deſperate generation of men to be dealt with. Their danger being preſent and eminent, no leſſe then if they were in the *fire*, they being ready to fall into the fire of hell, nay that fire having already taken hold of them, *their tongues being ſet on fire* with it; O ſeek we by any way or means to pluck them out of this fire. This do we for thoſe of our brethren who are fallen.

2. For thoſe who through the mercy of God ſupporting them, do yet *ſtand*, do what we may to hold them up. *Strengthning the weak hands, and confirming the feeble knees* (as the Prophet hath it) *Iſa.* 35.3. To this end, dealing one with another, as men wading over a deep, but fordable river, where the current runneth ſtrong, they take another by the hand that they may not be carried away with the ſtream. Thus let *Chriſtians*, (and (where it may be) *Churches*) joyne together in *holy combinations*, taking one another by the hand, mutually confirming and ſtrengthning each other, that ſo we and they may be able to ſtand againſt that ſtrong ſtream of *Blaſphemous Errors*, whereby many have been carried away already, and others are dayly endangered.

3. For the *Church*, as all of us are bound, do what we may to free that, that theſe *Red-Deagon waters* may not prevaile upon the face of it. To that end I have but one word more to ſay; Let all of us, and all others whom it concerneth, do what in us lieth that the *Government of Jeſus Chriſt* may be ſet up and eſtabliſhed in it. *When there was no King in Iſrael* (no Civil Government) *every one did that which was right in his own eyes*, Judg. 17.6. not that which was right in Gods eyes, but what every man fancied and pleaſed. And truly

truly thus hath it been in this unhappy *Interregnum*, this deplorable interval of *Church Government* in this Nation. While the former government hath been laid aſide, and no other effectually ſubſtituted in the roome of it, every man hath done in matters of Religion what was right in his own eyes. And *hinc illæ lachrymæ*, hence is it that this ſea of evils hath broken in upon the Church of God. For the ſtopping of the courſe hereof, let all who wiſh well to *Jeruſalem*, do what in them lyeth to promote the cauſe of God, in erecting a *Government* in his Church. This is the *means* which Chriſt hath ſanctified for the freeing of his Church from theſe great evils. Of the force and efficacy whereof all ages have had ſufficient experience. In the laſt age, (as bad as the Government then was, whether in the *Title* or *Exerciſe*, whether in the *Conſtitution* or *Adminiſtration* and management of it, yet) ſuch *night-birds* as theſe durſt not then fly abroad. Though ſome comparativly *ſleighter errors* began then to put up head, yet groſſer *Hereſies* durſt not appear. (An inſtance ſufficient to make good that received maxime, that *Tyranny is better then Anarchie. Better an ill-managed Government then no Government.*) In other of the *Reformed Churches*, where that form of Government, which was ſuppoſed to be modelled and laid out for this Church, hath obtained eſtabliſhment and countenance, ſuch evil weeds as theſe have not been ordinarily found to grow, at leaſt not to flouriſh under the ſhadow of it. So far hath Chriſt owned that (for ſubſtance) his *owne Ordinance*, as that few ſuch deſperate *Blaſphemous Hereticks* have been found in thoſe Churches. That the Church of God amongſt us may enjoy the like mercy, all of us contribute what we may, our *Prayers and endeavours*, that the work of God may be carried on for the ſetting up of a *wall*, a *fence* about this his *vineyard*, his *ſheepfold*; a wall, a fence of *Eccleſiaſtical Government* about this Church, which till it be, it cannot in a rational and ordinary way be expected or hoped, that theſe *Foxes* ſhould be kept from ſpoyling our *Vines*, or theſe *Wolves* from tearing and worrying the poor *Lambs* of Chriſt Thus far the Application hath run in a more general way.

Come we now in a few words to direct it in a more ſpecial way to the *Miniſters of the Goſpel*. Upon them the Text ſeemeth to look with a more ſpecial eye. *Know thou* (ſaith *Paul* to *Timothy* here) *that in the laſt dayes there ſhall be perilous times, for men ſhall be* (a- *Applic.* 2.

mong other vices which they ſhall be given up to) *Blaſphemers*. This *Timothy* muſt take ſpecial cognizance of. And wherefore he more then others? For this take a double Reaſon. 1. That he might not be *diſmay'd or diſcourag'd* by it. 2. That he might be *awakned, quickned, animated* to be ſo much the more *vigilant, conſtant couragious*, in appearing and acting for God, and for his truth againſt thoſe open adverſaries of it, & in oppoſing, and bearing up head againſt thoſe vices and errors of the times. And in this way let this *Premonition* be uſeful to all the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt. Now that we ſee this prediction verified amongſt us in ſo punctual a manner.

1. 1. *Be not diſcouraged at it.* Truth is, ſuch times as theſe are diſcouraging times. They are ſo to all *Chriſtians* who deſire to be found faithful with God. But ſpecially to the *Miniſters of Chriſt*. *Paul* would have *Timothy* here to know that there were καιροὶ χαλεποὶ, *difficult* and *perilous* times acoming; Perilous ſpecially to men of his *Coat*, his *Calling*. And ſuch they are. *When Profeſſours turn Apoſtatizing Blaſphemers, then let* Timothies, *the Miniſters of God look to themſelves.* Then every *Athanaſius* ſhall be a *Sataniſius*, and what not? they ſhall be loaded with ſlanderous imputations and obloquies to render them odious in the eyes of the world. But let not this *diſmay* or *diſcourage*. A thing which the beſt of men in this caſe may be ſubject to. We ſee it in *Jeremy*, when he ſaw what entertainment his perſon and meſſage found among many, how *The Word of the Lord was made a reproach unto him, and a deriſion dayly*, how his doctrine was ſleighted, derided, mocked at by ſuch men as the Apoſtle here ſpeaketh of, *Blaſphemers*, what were his thoughts hereupon? you may read them *Jer.* 20. 8, 9 *Then I ſaid, I will not make mention of him, nor ſpeak any more in his name.*] Hereupon *Jeremy*, what with fear and diſcontent, he beginneth to take up a reſolution of *ſilencing* himſelf of laying aſide his calling. Such *diſcouragements* in ſuch times the Miniſters of Chriſt are ſubject to. But let them not give way to them. Thus it hath been, and thus it is here foretold that it ſhould be. And wherefore foretold? but that the *Miniſters* of God (whom after a ſpecial manner it concerns) might not be ſo offended at it, as to be diſcoraged at it. *Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you that you ſhould not be offended* (ſaith our Saviour to his Diſciples, ſpeaking of the evill times which were to come after his departure from them, *John* 16. 1.) And ſo, this thing hath the ſpirit of God foretold, that the Miniſters of the

Goſpel

Gospel being *forewarned*, might also be *forearmed* against what ever disheartnings or discouragements.

2. But, on the other hand, *Awakened, Excited, animated*, to greater *Vigilancy, Constancy, Courage*. 2.

1. *Vigilancy*. When *Foxes* and *Wolves* are abroad, it is time for the *Shepherds* to look out. And such are *seducing Teachers*. *Foxes*. [*O Israel, thy Prophets are like the Foxes in the deserts*, (saith the Prophet *Ezekiel*) *cap.* 13.4 Such are false Prophets, seducing Teachers being (as *Paul* saith of *Elimas*, *Acts* 13.10.) *full of all subtilty and craft*. And as *Foxes*, so *Wolves*. *I know* (saith *Paul* to the Elders of *Ephesus*) *that after my departure grievous Wolves shall enter in amosg you, not sparing the flock*, Acts 20.29. meaning thereby *Seducers*, false Teachers, whom our Saviour describeth to be *Wolves in Sheeps clothing* Mat. 7.15. And being such, it standeth the *Ministers* of God (his Shepherds, as they are often stiled) in hand, to look out to them. To them is that speech directed, *Cant.* 2.15. *Take us the Foxes, the little Foxes that spoyle the Vines*] It is the speech of *Christ* to his *Ministers* (saith our new Annotations upon it, exciting them to look out, & have an eye to false teachers who seduce weak Christians. And *Paul* foretelling the *Elders* aforesaid what *Wolves* should break in upon the Church, in the next words he gives them an *Item*, bespeaking their vigilancy, *Therefore watch*, Act. 20. 31. The Ministers of Christ hearing of such dangerous instruments abroad, should be so much the more vigilant over their flocks.

2. And as vigilant over others, so *Constant* in respect of themselves. This is *Pauls* charge to *Timothy* in this chapter, 2 *Tim.* 3. Having foretold him what times and persons were to come, he giveth him his lesson, *v.* 14. *But continue thou* (saith he) *in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of*]. And let all the Ministers of Christ take it home to themselves. In the midst of what ever revolutions and turnings, though the whole world should turn round, yet let them stand like so many *Centers*, not so far complying with any error of the times as to decline any way or Truth of God, which they have beleeved, professed & held forth.

3. And being constant in the Truth, let them be so much the more *zealous and courageous in defending it*, and opposing the Adversaries of it. So far should this opposition be from damping their spirits, as that it should by an *antiperistasis* make the fire of holy zeale to burn so much the more intensly within them. Such

effect it had in *Paul*; when *Elimas the Sorcerer*, a seducing Teacher, withstood him, *seeking to turne the Deputy from the faith*, Act. 13.8,9. See how *Paul's* spirit was stirred within him, *Then* Paul *filled with the Holy Ghost set his eyes on him, and said, O full of all subtilty, and all mischief, thou child of the Devil, &c.*] with such a holy zeale did that good *Polycarpe* Saint *Iohns* disciple confront that Blasphemous Heretick *Marcion*, who meeting him, and demanding of him whether he knew him, *Yes saith he, Agnosco te primogenitum Diaboli, I know thee to be the first-born of the Devil.* So far should the Ministers of Christ be from being dismayed or terrified by these Adversaries, that they should (as *Calvin* speaks upon the Text) *Animos potius ad resistendum colligere*, rather gird up their loynes, and gather up their spirits, that so they may go out more couragiously in the strength of God against them.

Vsch. l. c.14.

This branch of the Application I might yet amplifie and inlarge, by shewing you in what *wayes*, and by what *meanes* the Ministers of God are to go out against such adversaries of the Truth; as *viz.* by *preaching* against them, *writing* against them, confuting their Errors, plucking off the Masks and Vizards and disguizes from their faces, discovering their Impostures; that so *their folly being made manifest to all men, they may proceed no farther* (as our Apostle hath it, *ver.* 10. of this *chapter*). But I have already expatiated far beyond the limits which I propounded to my selfe when I first took this subject in hand, and therefore shall here conclude, desiring God to make these Meditations as profitable as they are seasonable.

Nov: 3. 703

A good solid Sum:

FINIS.